COLLECTED WORKS OF ERASMUS

VOLUME 41

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# COLLECTED WORKS OF ERASMUS

## THE NEW TESTAMENT SCHOLARSHIP OF ERASMUS: AN INTRODUCTION WITH ERASMUS' PREFACES AND ANCILLARY WRITINGS

Edited by Robert D. Sider

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# Collected Works of Erasmus

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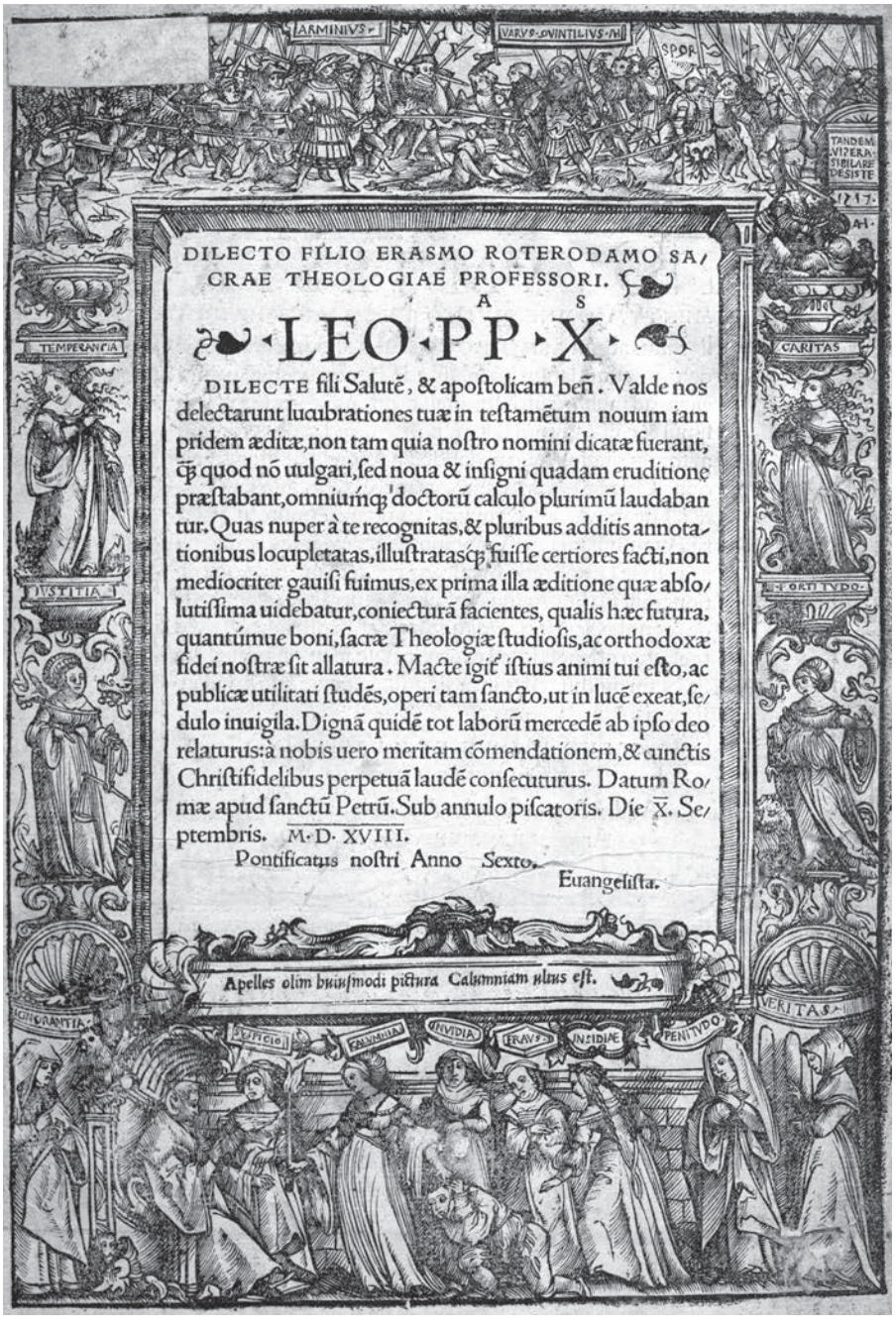
ARMINIVS
VARVS·QVINTILIVS·NI
SPQR
TANDEM VIRERA SIBILARE DESISTE
1517
TEMPERANTIA
IVSTITIA
CARITAS
VERITAS
DILECTO FILIO ERASMO ROTERODAMO SACRAE THEOLOGIAE PROFESSORI.
A S
LEO PP X
DILECTE fili Salutē, & apoſtolicam beñ. Valde nos delectarunt lucubrationes tuæ in teſtamētum nouum iam pridem æditæ, non tam quia noſtro nomini dicatæ fuerant, cp̄ quod nō uulgari, ſed noua & inſigni quadam eruditione præſtabant, omniumq; doctorū calculo plurimū laudabantur. Quas nuper à te recognitas, & pluribus additis annotationibus locupletatas, illuſtratasq; fuiſſe certiores facti, non mediocriter gauiſi fuimus, ex prima illa æditione quæ abſolutiſſima uidebatur, coniecturā facientes, qualis hæc futura, quantúmue boni, ſacræ Theologiæ ſtudioſis, ac orthodoxæ fidei noſtræ ſit allatura. Macte igit̄ iſtius animi tui eſto, ac publicæ utilitati ſtudēs, operi tam ſancto, ut in lucē exeat, ſedulo inuigila. Dignā quidē tot laborū mercedē ab ipſo deo relaturus: à nobis uero meritam cōmendationem, & cunctis Chriſtifidelibus perpetuā laudē conſecuturus. Datum Romæ apud ſanctū Petrū. Sub annulo piſcatoris. Die X. Septembris. M·D· XVIII.
Pontificatus noſtri Anno Sexto.
Euangeliſta.
Apelles olim huiuſmodi pictura Calumniam uitus eſt.
SUPERCILIO
CALUMNIA
INVIDIA
FRAVS
INSIDIAE
PENITVDO

Letter of Leo (1518) commending Erasmus' 'lucubrations' on the New Testament
The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto

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# Preface

This volume is intended to serve as a prolegomenon to Erasmus' New Testament scholarship as it is found in volumes 41–60 of the *Collected Works of Erasmus*. The volume includes annotated translations of the major essays that appeared as prefaces to one or more of Erasmus' five editions of the New Testament. It includes as well numerous other texts that were given a role to play in some of the editions, primarily letters and responses to critics, which, though ancillary to the main enterprise, shed light on Erasmus' perception of his work. We have also brought together here the prefaces that accompanied three editions of the New Testament that were published separately with Erasmus' Latin translation only, without the Greek and without the annotations. In addition, as the volume is first in the series of twenty devoted to Erasmus' New Testament scholarship, we offer an essay that endeavours to set Erasmus' work on the New Testament in the context of his life, to trace its growth and development, and to highlight its characterizing features.

For the purposes of publication CWE defines the 'New Testament Scholarship' as the five editions of the New Testament and the *Paraphrases* on the books of the New Testament in their various editions. It will at once be observed that no attempt has been made to provide in these volumes a translation of Erasmus' Latin translation of the Greek text of the New Testament. This follows the general policy of CWE, which does not offer English translations of Erasmus' translations from Greek into Latin. In any case, our definition of Erasmus' New Testament scholarship warrants further elaboration.

In the Erasmian literary corpus, the canonical New Testament functions in a multifaceted way: it is the subject of systematic investigative scholarship, it is a pregnant source of allusions rendered effective in works devoted to the promotion of piety, it is the basis for the authentication of Christian belief and experience, it is both a witness and a court of appeal in disputes. The *Moria*, a dynamic blend of satire and piety, its later pages replete with biblical allusions, may be seen as a disquisition on 1 Corinthians 1:18–30. The New Testament portraits of Christ and Paul, and the parables of Jesus exemplify in

the memorable adage 'The Sileni of Alcibiades'[1] the paradoxical experience of humanity that often below an ugly exterior lies a thing of beauty, validating the Christian belief in the Incarnation. Pauline allusions abound in the *Enchiridion*, where Erasmus summons the languid Christian to become an active soldier in the militia of Christ. The debate with Luther demanded careful consideration of texts from both the Old and New Testaments, as well as a consideration of hermeneutical principles.[2] In its Matthean version the Lord's Prayer functions in the *Querela pacis* as a rebuke to those who lust for war,[3] it concludes the *Explanatio symboli* in a short exposition based on philological analysis,[4] and it receives an exhaustive paraphrase suitable for the devotional exercises of Justus Dietz, who requested it,[5] a paraphrase whose exposition appears to a very great extent as a tissue of images from the New Testament.[6] None of the works just cited is intended as a sustained scholarly effort to represent a holistic understanding of the New Testament, though they do provide a referential context valuable for the understanding of the scholarship that Erasmus more intentionally focused on the illumination of the canonical Christian Scriptures.

The relation of the Controversies to the New Testament scholarship is more problematic, particularly where Erasmus' critics made his New Testament and *Paraphrases* either their primary target or a fundamental part of their criticism. Erasmus' responses to such critics are integral to his New Testament scholarship. On the one hand, Erasmus' *Annotations* are increasingly augmented by additions answering quite specifically his critics – one can easily trace the efforts he made in his annotations to respond to Edward Lee, Diego López Zúñiga, and Frans Titelmans. In fact, some very major additions to the annotations correspond *ad verbum* or nearly so to passages in his responses, and this is especially so in the 1522 edition of the *Annotations* where it is not always clear whether the composition of a passage in the *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae*[7] preceded or followed the composition of the identical

* * * * *

1 *Adagia* III iii 1
2 Cf the discussion on the obscurity of Scripture, 'New Testament Scholarship' 262–4.
3 Cf CWE 27 308–10.
4 Cf CWE 70 386–7.
5 Cf CWE 69 56–8.
6 Cf the allusions identified in the footnotes CWE 69 59–77.
7 Full title, *Apologia respondens ad ea quae Iacobus Lopis Stunica taxaverat in prima dumtaxat Novi Testamenti aeditione*, ie 'An Apology in Response to the Criticisms of Diego López Zúñiga Made on the First Edition Only of the New Testament'; cited in abbreviated form as *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae*.

passage in an annotation. On the other hand, the many works Erasmus published specifically in response to critics, as in the responses to Noël Béda or to Alberto Pio, often explain his aims in writing, for example, the *Paraphrases*, and illuminate the formulations of his thought. Thus Erasmus' responses to his critics are indispensable to any study of his New Testament scholarship. They may, nevertheless, be distinguished from the corpus of New Testament scholarship. Erasmus himself clearly distinguished the *Apologiae* 'Defences' from his 'New Testament' in the two *Catalogues* in which he arranged his *opera*, one from a 1524 revision of a letter (1523) to Johann von Botzheim, one attached to a letter of 1530 to Hector Boece.[8] His instinct seems right: the Defences differ in tone, rhetoric, and function from the *Annotations*, and certainly from the *Paraphrases*. The Defences are apologetic and exculpatory, the argument personalized and the critics named, the setting circumstantial and particular.

As New Testament scholarship, the *Paraphrases* appear with some ambiguity. On the one hand, Erasmus clearly saw his *Paraphrases* as the legacy of his work on the New Testament. In the 1524 *Catalogue* the New Testament and the *Paraphrases* are juxtaposed, while in the later *Catalogue* they are both included in the same 'sixth' series. On the other hand, Erasmus frequently draws a distinction between his New Testament and the *Paraphrases*. In a letter to Johann Henckel he contrasts his New Testament, which was intended 'to restore the theology of the schools,' with the *Paraphrases*, which were 'to help the less energetic and encourage the hesitant reader with something easy and accessible.'[9] In a letter to Alonso Ruiz de Virués he included the *Paraphrases* with other 'works of piety' and distinguished them from his works intended for scholars.[10] Erasmus' conception of the *Paraphrases* as 'works of piety' is clarified in a revealing letter of 3 September 1526, in which he proposed to the Aldine Press that it publish some of his 'religious works' – the *De immensa Dei misericordia*, the *Modus orandi Deum*, his commentaries on the Psalms, and his *Paraphrases* on the New Testament.[11]

If the *Paraphrases* are not in the first instance intended for scholars, they are nevertheless grounded in the scholarship that underlies and emerges from Erasmus' New Testament. They look not only to the Vulgate text but

* * * * *

8 Cf Epp 1341A:1507–1639 and 2283:43–242. Both *Catalogues* are conveniently available in CWE 24 694–702.
9 Ep 1672:144–50
10 Ep 1968:65–8
11 Cf Ep 1746:18–22.

also to the Greek text and Latin translation Erasmus published.[12] In addition, the *Paraphrases* reflect in the development of ideas the extensive researches Erasmus undertook into the exegesis of patristic and medieval authors, so evident in the *Annotations*. Indeed the scholarly mind behind the *Paraphrases* is evident in Erasmus' acknowledgment that his work on the *Paraphrases* contributed to his *Annotations*. In the 1524 *Catalogue* he wrote: 'I have a [fourth] edition of the *Annotations* ready, having discovered while writing the *Paraphrases* many things that had previously escaped me,' a point he had already made in his *Responsio ad annotationes Lei*.[13]

In all of the five great editions of the New Testament, each with the Greek text, the Latin translation, and annotations, Erasmus added material supportive of his endeavour. The 1516 edition is notable for the three short, well-tailored prefatory essays – the *Paraclesis*, the *Methodus*, and the *Apologia* – essays that articulate the presuppositions of the undertaking and anticipate objections to it. In later editions the prefatory material was vastly increased, the *Methodus,* in fact, to book size in the edition of 1519. But it was the addition after 1516 of a set of responses to criticism that substantially changed the character of the introduction to Erasmus' New Testament. The most important of these was a set of over one hundred *capita* – short descriptive paragraphs – responding to criticisms that Erasmus' work on the New Testament had received. Fundamental themes that illuminate the rationale for sound biblical translation thread their way through these paragraphs. These *capita* served as a prelude to seven 'indexes' with a 'see-for-yourself' character whose intent was to assemble a list of indisputable instances of the faults in the Vulgate that necessitated its revision into a new translation, and to offer a swift and impressive glance at the disfiguration that had occurred in the church's traditional Bible during translation and the long process of transmission.[14]

A few other smaller items supported the scholarly endeavour: the elaborate title page, the dedicatory letter to Pope Leo and from *1519* Leo's commendatory letter to Erasmus, in *1516* an unobtrusive letter of recommendation from Johann Froben, the publisher, and an 'afterword' by Johannes

* * * * *

12 Cf CWE 44 xiv–xvi, CWE 50 xv–xvi, and 'Paraphrase' in the General Indexes of CWE 44 and 48. For the wealth of biblical texts reflected in the *Paraphrases* see especially the Indexes of Scriptural Passages Cited in CWE 43 and 45.

13 Cf Ep 1341A:493–5 and CWE 72 79.

14 The seven indexes were omitted in the 1535 edition of the New Testament, but the *capita* continued in all editions from 1519 to the end.

Oecolampadius, who assisted with the publication. Small though some of these items are, they come to us as part and parcel of Erasmus' New Testament and sharpen our perspective on his scholarship. All are included in this prolegomenous volume.

The *Ratio verae theologiae*, substituted in *1519* for the *Methodus*, and the *Paraclesis* soon found a life of their own and circulated independently of the New Testament. In fact the *Ratio* appeared as a preface to the New Testament in *1519* only, while the *Paraclesis* was no longer published with the prefaces after *1522*. In 1524 and again in 1530 Erasmus identified them in his *Catalogue* as 'works of religious instruction,' listing them with such books as the *Enchiridion* and the *Exomologesis*, works written in the interest of Christian piety. But both assume that the Bible is central to fruitful Christian living, and both propound principles fundamental to biblical hermeneutics. Their inclusion within the New Testament Scholarship series is legitimate not only because they were placed in the early editions as prefaces to the New Testament, but also because they are important for the understanding of Erasmus' hope that, through a New Testament speaking in language effective to instruct, to delight, and to move, he might kindle a flame of piety and illuminate understanding.

When the *Novum instrumentum* was published in March 1516, Erasmus may not have anticipated its success measured by sales. Writing in June of 1516 to two friends, Thomas Linacre and Guillaume Budé, he disclosed that a second edition was already planned but warned both to keep the information secret, since the volumes of the first edition would all stay in the shop if the buyers knew a second edition was in the offing.[15] But the New Testament clearly sold well, as Erasmus' subsequent affirmations of its widespread presence attest.[16] Publishing firms evidently saw the possibility of a profitable investment in the publication of a pocket-size New Testament with Erasmus' Latin translation only, without either the Greek text or the annotations. Such an edition was offered to the public first by Dirk Martens in 1519, then by the Basel publisher Andreas Cratander in 1520, and finally by

* * * * *

15 Cf Epp 417:9–10 and 421:78–80.

16 Cf eg Ep 1060:21–3: 'Many leading scholars all over the world express their thanks for my New Testament'; cf also Ep 1400:355–9. In 1526 Erasmus claimed that over 100,000 copies had been sold; cf Ep 1723:36–8; the number presumably includes the separate Latin editions identified in the next sentence; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 183 with n719.

Johann Froben in 1522.[17] For each of these editions Erasmus wrote a preface, brief for the Martens edition, for the Cratander edition a longer preface that may appear as virtually a homiletic address based on Matthew 11:28, while the Froben edition added a substantial essay, the *De philosophia evangelica*. It is true that these pieces reiterate the themes of the *philosophia Christi* central to Erasmus' thought – but their appearance in the new context is not without significance – and belong to Erasmus' New Testament scholarship.[18]

Erasmus' New Testament scholarship proceeded in the context of highly dramatic contemporary movements and events. Islam, particularly as it was embodied in Turkish power, threatened Christian Europe; to meet the challenge the Fifth Lateran Council (1512–17) proclaimed a crusade, authorizing the sale of indulgences to support the effort. In the year following the publication of the first edition of Erasmus' New Testament, Martin Luther burst on the scene; indeed, the Ninety-Five Theses appeared almost simultaneously with Erasmus' first *Paraphrase*, the *Paraphrase on Romans*. The death of the emperor Maximilian I in January of 1519 brought on the election later that year of his grandson Charles as emperor, and this in turn resulted in bitter hostility among the great powers of Europe precisely when, in the early twenties, Erasmus was writing his *Paraphrases* on the Gospels, which he would dedicate one by one to the chief contenders in the war. When the Reformation gained force in the same decade, Erasmus' biblical scholarship became a focus for attack as 'Lutheran' by the Paris theologians and by Alberto Pio in Rome, while the Sacramentarians, representing a reform movement with centres in Basel, Strasbourg, and Zurich, found in his scholarship evidence of support for their views. Meanwhile, the humanist cause of 'languages and good literature' so passionately advocated by Erasmus and so central to his own New Testament work was met with some strong opposition in the universities, where it was viewed by some of its antagonists as a major contributing factor in the Lutheran and Sacramentarian 'heresies' of the day. To isolate the account of Erasmus' New Testament scholarship from the story of these movements is to narrow inappropriately the perspective from which to view his work, and I have therefore, in an introductory essay, attempted to frame the account of the New Testament scholarship as it progressed from

* * * * *

17 Froben published a separate Latin edition first in 1521, but it was virtually a reproduction of the Cratander volume; cf Allen Ep 1010 introduction.

18 The first of the prefaces appears in CWE as Ep 1010; the remaining pieces are translated in this volume. For the *De philosophia evangelica* as both preface and afterword see 'Separate Latin Editions' 715.

stage to stage with a picture, sketchy to be sure, of the immediate world of Erasmus as he worked at his desk.

The essay set out below under the title 'The New Testament Scholarship of Erasmus: An Introduction' is intended primarily as an introduction to the twenty volumes devoted in CWE to the New Testament scholarship of Erasmus. It endeavours to be an account of that scholarship drawn primarily from the witness of Erasmus himself, for which, of course, the letters are of greatest importance. The first objective has been to offer a descriptive narrative of the development of Erasmus' New Testament scholarship from reflections registered in his early literary endeavours to the later published works. This has determined the organization of the essay: a section on early anticipations of the later scholarship is followed by sections in a sequence closely chronological, which traces details of preparation and delineates essential features of each of the major publications – the five editions of the New Testament, the *Paraphrases* in order of first publication, and the later editions of the *Paraphrases* in the 1530s, as they had received significant revisions. A section on the separate Latin editions of the New Testament and the later editions of the *Ratio* to 1523 is given a place after the *Paraphrases* on the apostolic Epistles that were completed in 1521. Another section describing the reaction in the later 1520s to Erasmus' New Testament work intervenes between our account of the last of the *Paraphrases* on the Gospels, published early in 1524, and the consideration of the next great New Testament publication, the fourth edition of the New Testament in 1527. The many responses Erasmus gave between 1524 and 1529 to the critics of his New Testament scholarship reflect so broadly on Erasmus' New Testament project that it is essential to view these as a whole and in the period of time to which they belong.

In tracing the course of Erasmus' New Testament scholarship I have endeavoured to provide something like a 'Readers' Guide.' For this reason close attention has been paid to chronology, though in spite of the multitudinous details furnished by Erasmus' letters there remain some frustrating gaps in the timeline. Readers will also wish to have some guidance, in the case of the editions of the New Testament, in recognizing the essential characteristics of 'annotation' as we see it in Erasmus' work, and will appreciate some description of the physical character of the books in which Erasmus' New Testament scholarship was published. I have undertaken to call attention to significant developments reflected in the various editions of the New Testament and to highlight special features in each, particularly in the *Annotations*. As we should expect in a descriptive study, I have not hesitated, where it seemed advantageous to the reader, to indulge in detail. To understand Erasmus' achievement in writing the *Paraphrases* it is helpful to trace some of the themes that he seemed to have observed in his own reading

of the New Testament books and wished to emphasize for his readers; I have attempted to note some themes selectively, as illustration, by no means exhaustively, and without any pretension to having found a conclusive interpretation at any point. Inasmuch as I offer here a reading of Erasmus' New Testament scholarship, I have not had originality of interpretation as my goal, nor have I attempted to enter into discussion with modern scholarship on difficult problems encountered in our subject. It is the primary sources especially that are reflected in this account, as they appear in the sixteenth-century editions of Erasmus' New Testament scholarship, in the great Dutch edition of 1703–6 known as LB (for Lugduni Batavorum, that is, Leiden in the Netherlands), as they also have been set forth with immense and impressive scholarship, including abundant bibliography, in Allen's *Opus epistolarum*, and in the editions of our own time, those of Amsterdam (ASD) and Toronto (CWE). It is a scholarship that appropriately tempers the Erasmian point of view emerging so unabashedly, indeed inevitably, from his letters, *apologiae*, and other writings. I note here that references in this work to ASD and CWE are detailed (page and line) only when specificity is essential for identification; many annotations, for example, are brief, so that the biblical reference with the lemma is sufficient identification. I also note that references to PG, PL, and other similar sources are given by standard division; page, column, or line are added only where necessary to facilitate specific identification. Erasmus' annotations, frequently short, are cited by biblical chapter, verse, and cue phrase, though more specific identification is provided where needed.

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outstanding cooperation of all the translators and annotators of this volume. I profited from Dr Donald Conroy's annotated translation of the *Ratio verae theologiae* ('The Ecumenical Theology of Erasmus of Rotterdam: A Sudy of the *Ratio verae theologiae* Translated into English and Annotated' PhD thesis, University of Pittsburgh 1974, University of Michigan Microfilms, Ann Arbor MI), in particular from some useful clues given there for annotation. I am grateful for the excellent suggestions given by the two anonymous readers assigned by the press to review the manuscript, and I share the gratitude of all involved in the publication of the *Collected Works of Erasmus* for the generous and unwavering support of the University of Toronto Press for this project. The late Ronald Schoeffel, senior humanities editor for the press, and Suzanne Rancourt, manager, humanities acquisitions, with gracious efficiency steered the book through its various stages to publication, while the knowledgeable and sympathetic supervision of Barbara Porter, managing editor for CWE, has effectively facilitated the publication of this volume. Lynn Browne repeatedly applied her magnificent skills to organizing the copy on computer. To my copy editor, Carla DeSantis, I owe most heartfelt thanks for her patience, wisdom, expertise, and remarkable capabilities. A special note of thanks is owed to Philip Rosenbaum for his generous gift towards the publication of this volume and for the association and personal friendship that has resulted therefrom. Finally, no one is more deserving of appreciation than my wife, Lura Mae, who has lived with this volume, as I have, sometimes with less but often with more intensity for two decades.

RDS

# The New Testament Scholarship of Erasmus: An Introduction

## I ANTECEDENTS

The New Testament scholarship of Erasmus must be seen in the first instance as a product of the humanism that swept over Europe from the twelfth century to well after Erasmus' death in 1536. Humanists believed that ancient authors lived in the texts they had written and through the medium of the text could be present to their modern readers with an immediacy more compelling than if they had been present in person. When Erasmus dedicated to William Warham his great edition of Jerome's letters, he wrote that through their books men of the past speak to us 'more effectively dead than alive,' and it was his opinion that one who 'lived in familiar converse with Cicero … will know less of Cicero than they do who by constant reading of what he wrote converse with his spirit every day.'[1] Thus those who mastered the classical languages in which the texts were composed discovered in the texts a human experience that was neither strange nor foreign. This was cause enough to stimulate the widespread search in the Renaissance for ancient manuscripts, the correction and production of editions of the classical authors, and the translation of Greek manuscripts into Latin with accompanying annotation. Erasmus' edition of a Greek text of the New Testament, based essentially on the evidence of Greek manuscripts supported by inference from Latin codices – an edition that also supplied a fresh Latin translation of the Greek and explanatory notes – thus applied current modalities to the Holy Scriptures. In the sacred text it was possible for readers to confront the characters portrayed, and especially Jesus Christ, as living persons, just as it was likewise

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1 Ep 396:46–53; cf the first letter of Francesco Petrarca to Cicero (*Familiares* 24.3) where Petrarch says that he seemed to hear Cicero's actual voice when he read his letters!

possible for those who authored the records of the early church to become present among the people of the sixteenth century.

Erasmus was in his fiftieth year when the first edition of his New Testament was published in March 1516.[2] In spite of repeated asseverations in his early letters that he intended to devote himself wholly to Scripture,[3] it is unlikely that he had formulated any clear plan for what became his New Testament much before its actual publication. But Erasmus' New Testament scholarship was, from first to last, grounded in the humanism to which he had devoted himself as a young man, and it is possible to discern in the humanism of the young man convictions and preferences that foreshadowed the manner of approach he would take to his New Testament scholarship and that would become the chief principles directing the enterprise.

While Erasmus still lived as a monk among the Augustinians at Steyn, he expressed to a soulmate, Cornelis Gerard, his passion for the 'ancient ideal of eloquence.'[4] In a long list of humanists who had achieved the ideal, he noted Valla and asked whether anyone could be found who was a 'more devoted follower of the ancient style than Lorenzo Valla …'[5] The young Erasmus regarded Valla as a champion in the contest between the 'ancients' and the 'moderns,' for in his *Elegantiae* Valla had 'fought to refute the foolish notions of the barbarians and to bring back into use the regular practice of authors of prose and verse, long since buried and forgotten.'[6] Erasmus names as some of the moderns 'the outstanding ringleaders of barbarism ... Papias, Uguccio of Pisa, Eberhard, the *Catholicon*, John of Garland, Isidore …'[7] 'Anyone who may desire to stammer can cleave to works like these, but he who wishes to speak must choose Terence …'[8]

In these early letters Erasmus prized the ancients not only for their eloquence and good Latin but also as instructors in good morals. It was thus

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2 The date of Erasmus' birth has long been controversial. For the date 1466 see Harry Vredefeld 'The Ages of Erasmus and the Year of his Birth' *Renaissance Quarterly* 46 (1993) 754–809; Vredefeld's view is explained in the *Methodus* n34.

3 Cf eg Epp 74:5–10 (1498), 164:48–55 (1501), 181:29–31 (1504).

4 Ep 23:39, 57. Erasmus lived in the monastery at Steyn from c 1487 until 1493 or 1494, taking the vows after a year in the novitiate. While still at Steyn he was, in 1492, priested by the elderly David, bishop of Utrecht, his diocesan bishop. For the date at which Erasmus left Steyn see ASD I-1 10.

5 Ep 23:76–7

6 Ep 23:109–11

7 Ep 26:99–100

8 Ep 31:96–7

that Erasmus justified his labour in making at Steyn a copy of a manuscript of Terence. Only 'fools … goats … fail to perceive how much moral goodness exists in Terence's plays … how much charm in their epigrams … [how] suitable … for the purpose of showing up men's vices.'[9] In the production of this copy the humanist instinct emerged: Erasmus realized that these plays, so fruitful for their readers, needed critical editing. He praised the book lover who thumbs, batters, wears out his books, filling up the margins with annotations, preferring the marks of a fault erased to a neat copy full of faults.[10] Erasmus did just that, 'editing,' so to speak, the manuscript he had in hand. He complained that he took 'more pains over correcting it than writing it.'[11]

Curiously, patristic authors, later so crucial to Erasmus' New Testament scholarship, play a minor role in the expressions of humanism in the letters from the monastery. Sidonius (Apollinaris) is cited with Persius as a 'highly sophisticated' writer lacking, however, a charming style.[12] Erasmus had a copy of Proba's *Cento*, which he liked much less than the 'ancient style of eloquence' he found in the letter and 'prologues' written by the *Cento*'s editor.[13] Otherwise only Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome are mentioned.[14] While in the letters from Steyn these serve chiefly as examples, the first allusion to Jerome reveals a close attachment to the ancient biblical scholar, for Erasmus tells us that he has read and copied out all the letters of Jerome, and calls to mind Jerome's image of the 'captive woman,' an image that functioned in early Christian literature to justify the use of secular culture in the interest of Christian faith.[15] It is an image to which Erasmus himself will appeal in his biblical scholarship.

Erasmus left Steyn to become secretary to Hendrik van Bergen, bishop of Cambrai. Within the year he went to Halsteren, a retreat near Bergen, to escape the plague.[16] While there, he drafted in dialogue form an early version

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9 Ep 31:66–72
10 Cf Ep 31:37–9.
11 Ep 31:30
12 Cf Ep 27:47–51.
13 Cf Ep 32:40–6. Proba, a fourth-century Roman, wrote a poem elaborating Christian themes. The poem was a patchwork of verses (a *cento*) taken from Virgil. The poem was edited and published in 1489.
14 Cf Epp 22:18–20, 23:15–20, 26:57–9, 31:98–9.
15 Cf Ep 22:21–8; Jerome Epp 21.13 and 70.2; and n22 below. The image of the captive woman is found in Deut 21:11–14. Erasmus recalls the image in the *Enchiridion*, one of his early publications; cf CWE 66 34.
16 For the location see the map with inset CWE 1 xxviii.

of the *Antibarbari*.[17] The dialogue is designed to make the case against the 'barbarians,' those Christians who recoil from secular literature as profane and consequently fail to develop any facility to speak good Latin. Jacob Batt, a friend of Erasmus, at the time of the dialogue town secretary but once a schoolteacher, argues passionately on behalf of a humanistic education, serving as a persona for Erasmus. Batt draws a pervasive contrast between the stammering speech of the moderns and the eloquence of the ancients. Here the contrast focuses sharply on theological literature, and in Batt's speeches the appeal to the ancients finds a formulation that quite strikingly anticipates numerous themes found in Erasmus' later hermeneutical writings. Batt stresses the eloquence of ancient speech, an eloquence that is not merely adornment but a vital stimulant to the well-being of theology. It is 'the refined literary style of the old theologians' that the 'barbarians' scorn, a style 'they cannot hope to follow.'[18] As Batt approaches the conclusion of his *apologia*, the names of the great writers of Christian antiquity become increasingly prevalent. A critique of the style of Jerome, Lactantius, Ambrose, Bernard, Bede is completed by pointing contemptuously to the modern-day theologians, the *recentiores*, who 'do not even speak.'[19] Then, soon, over several pages the great heroes of Christian antiquity come before us in a prosopographical tour de force: Quadratus, Aristides, Justin, Clement, Origen, Gregory of Nazianzus, Didymus, John Chrysostom, Lactantius, Severus, Cyprian. Batt follows swiftly with a damning judgment on the authorities acknowledged by the barbarians: 'Let us compare these men with the scholastics and the theologians of our own day. We shall see that … they [that is, the latter] are so far inferior that one would call them shadows rather than men.'[20] Again, he summons Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, and Bede, and draws the conclusion: 'After these writers the lustre and polish of theology declined, and

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17 The *Antibarbari* was published by Froben in 1520. The 1520 edition was a revised version of the dialogue drafted in 1494 or 1495, which itself had existed in different forms in earlier states. The major differences between the dialogue draft and the 1520 publication occur in the first part of the work. The references and citations that follow here are from the later part of the work and thus can be reliably dated to the draft of 1494/5. For the complex history of the composition and publication of the work see CWE 23 5–6 and ASD I-1 7–32.

18 *Antibarbari* CWE 23 51:25–6

19 *Antibarbari* CWE 23 105:15–34

20 *Antibarbari* CWE 23 107:25–109:5. This review of great names as witnesses is a rhetorical flourish in which Erasmus will indulge on occasion in his *Annotations*; cf eg 'New Testament Scholarship' 75–6. We need not assume from their recitation here that Erasmus in the mid-1490s knew these authors well.

degenerated little by little, and it began to collect a great deal of rust.'[21] The failure of theology was, ultimately, rooted in the loss of eloquence.

If at this time Erasmus had only a nodding acquaintance with many of the Christian authors he has cited, it is quite otherwise with Jerome and Augustine. Under the persona of Batt, Erasmus cites Jerome extensively, drawing from him the image of the captive gentile woman, stripped of her meritricious adornment to serve the people of God, a figure representing pagan learning made useful for the service of Christ.[22] The appeal to Augustine's *De doctrina christiana* is both impressive and anticipatory. He had clearly read this work thoroughly, possibly memorized parts of it.[23] He draws from it those parts that demonstrate Augustine's commitment to learning secular literature for the benefit of the faith. Batt points in particular to Augustine's image of 'stealing the wealth of the Egyptians,' taking their gold and silver, that is, using pagan learning for the adornment of the faith.[24] One must learn grammar and dialectic. If here Batt passes over poetry and rhetoric, nevertheless he notes that Augustine thought the other arts 'likely to be of no little advantage to a theologian,' and he judges the knowledge of natural history particularly necessary to the study of Holy Scripture since one cannot understand Scripture unless one knows the names and nature of the many natural objects of which it speaks.[25] This principle Erasmus will repeat in the *Ratio*, will put into practice in his *Annotations*, and will follow, if less obviously, in his *Paraphrases*.

In the *Antibarbari* Scripture plays a somewhat incidental role, but we should notice the application of the fundamental rule of 'context,' attributable no doubt to standard rhetorical practice, in a very conscious contrast with the use of Scripture as a source of propositions that appeared to characterize scholastic methods. To wrest from the opponents their claim on the Pauline dictum that 'knowledge puffs up,'[26] Batt insists on looking to the context: 'We shall take his meaning rightly if we compare what goes before and what comes after this passage,'[27] whereupon he carefully reconstructs the circumstances out of which the dictum arose. Later, he turns to address

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21 *Antibarbari* CWE 23 109:39–112:2
22 Cf *Antibarbari* CWE 23 91–3. See Jerome Ep 70.2; and n15 above.
23 Cf Charles Béné *Érasme et saint Augustin ou l'influence de saint Augustin sur l'humanisme d'Érasme* (Geneva 1969) 62–7, 78–87.
24 *Antibarbari* CWE 23 97:20–1; for the biblical allusion see Exod 12:35–6.
25 Cf *Antibarbari* CWE 23 94–8 and Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 2.40.60.
26 1 Cor 8:1
27 *Antibarbari* CWE 23 71:25–6

the carping of the opponents of learning who bring forward a whole raft of isolated texts. Batt decries their method, complaining that these barbarians – 'stupid men' – 'throw in our faces a few little extracts,' passages taken out of context, and 'twist and distort for other purposes things rightly said.'[28] The correct meaning emerges from a consideration of the circumstances, the addressees, and the 'very sequence of the passage,'[29] which is to say that a responsible exegete looks for the 'sensible interpretation.'[30] The opponents' method of citing Scripture belongs to 'the quibbles of the theologians.'[31] Indeed for all their appeal to Scripture, these men never really read the Scriptures.[32] These reflections anticipate principles and themes insistently articulated in Erasmus' later biblical scholarship.

The rule of context applied to the interpretation of Scripture suggests that the clarification of Scripture is enabled by the rational techniques learned through the liberal disciplines.[33] Batt goes further when he applies the humanist practice of stylistic criticism to the authors of Holy Writ, certainly anticipating the practice of Erasmus in his *Annotations*. Batt distinguishes the style of biblical authors, addressing thereby even the question of authorship: he speaks of the 'sublime utterance' of John the Evangelist, observes that the speech of the Petrine Epistles is 'unpolished,' affirms the 'eloquence' of James, proof that the Epistle could not have been written by a rustic.[34] He believes that 'one may guess fairly conclusively from the speeches in [Paul's] defence which are in the Acts of the Apostles that Paul sometimes spoke from a premeditated or even written text,'[35] and he affirms that the authorship of apostolic Epistles reveals in their style the individuality of their authors, whose efforts the Holy Spirit sustained.[36] The approach to biblical interpretation implied here clearly qualifies the doctrine of the divine inspiration of

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28 *Antibarbari* CWE 23 85:13–17
29 Cf *Antibarbari* CWE 23 86:12–21.
30 'Sensible interpretation': *sana interpretatio*, *Antibarbari* CWE 23 117:4; cf ASD I-1 133:18.
31 *Antibarbari* CWE 23 86:23
32 *Antibarbari* CWE 23 101:6
33 A position Erasmus will take later, affirming it perhaps most sharply in responding to Luther and Cousturier; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 263 and 275 with n1158.
34 Cf *Antibarbari* CWE 23 103:21–6.
35 *Antibarbari* 23 116:6–9
36 *Antibarbari* 23 117:26–32; cf also ibidem 118:8–9: '… the gift of the Holy Spirit does not exclude human work, but comes to its aid.' The role of the Holy Spirit in the production of Scripture became a burning issue for Erasmus in

Scripture: the Holy Bible is in some sense a human book, and though written with the support of the Divine Spirit, it is nevertheless the product of human authors contributing their own idiom and personality and therefore subject to the methods of investigation applied to other books.

We should note yet the sense of historical distance revealed in the *Antibarbari* between the primitive church described in the narratives of Scripture and the era of Erasmus. Those who insist on imitating the apostles must acknowledge that what was appropriate then is not necessarily appropriate to modern times. 'These times demand another kind of life, other ways of living.'[37] The Spirit was undoubtedly present to administer the necessary skills of language and knowledge to the disciples. 'But since things are very different [now], and we are not to expect the visitation of the Spirit, there is need for liberal disciplines.'[38]

It is not insignificant that Batt, mouthpiece for Erasmus, represents in himself the gracious union of rhetoric and theology. As Batt undertakes to exegete the Pauline passage 'knowledge puffs up,' a brief aside arrests our attention: 'Look out, Batt is going to play the theologian' – an aside more pointed by an allusion just before to those who are 'theologians and ignorant all the same.'[39] A few pages further on, the symbiosis of poet and theologian becomes explicit when Batt's respondent, the doctor, jokingly says, 'Why, Batt, whoever would have believed a poetic fellow like you would have so much theology in him?'[40] Later, it is Erasmus himself, the narrator, who expresses amazement at Batt's theological instinct, knowledge, and ability: he found it unlikely that even a 'practised theologian' could have quoted so many lines from ecclesiastical writers, and that in spite of his 'deep devotion to the Muses' Batt has read the theologians' books.[41] Batt represents a new kind of theologian, a rhetorician whose eloquence becomes theological, the kind of theologian Erasmus himself would come to represent in his New Testament scholarship.

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confrontation with his critics. Erasmus never departed far from the fundamental position he articulates here in the *Antibarbari*; cf eg 'New Testament Scholarship' 275 (Cousturier) and 284 (Spanish monks).

37 *Antibarbari* CWE 23 113:22–3. In 1531 the Paris theologians, adopting this very principle, would challenge Erasmus on his application of it; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 339–40 with n1459.

38 *Antibarbari* CWE 23 120:38–121:2

39 *Antibarabari* CWE 23 71:26–7, 14–15

40 *Antibarbari* CWE 23 74:2–4

41 *Antibarbari* CWE 23 101:22–7

The bishop of Cambrai had employed Erasmus to secure his services as secretary, which he particularly desired in expectation of a trip to Rome to receive a cardinal's hat.[42] When this failed to materialize, Erasmus, with the bishop's blessing, went to Paris (1495) to prepare to take a doctorate in theology at the Collège de Montague.[43] Almost at once Erasmus attempted to establish himself among the humanists of Paris.[44] But Erasmus detested life at the Collège and left within a year, returning to Bergen and then later in the summer of 1496 to the monastery at Steyn. Here Claes Warnerszoon (Nicolaus Wernerus), a sympathetic friend, later prior of the monastery, encouraged him to return to his studies in Paris,[45] and for the next few years Erasmus lived in Paris, evidently attending some 'Scotist' lectures, which he could only mock.[46] At the same time he apparently engaged in some form of biblical pedagogy – more than three decades later Hector Boece, an associate of Erasmus at the Collège de Montague, wrote to Erasmus recalling the illuminating way in which Erasmus had expounded the Scriptures to him.[47] During this period Erasmus supported himself by tutoring students, including several English men, among them William Blount (fourth Baron Mountjoy), who invited Erasmus to accompany him to England in the early summer of 1499.[48] As a result of a royal proclamation on 20 August forbidding anyone to leave England,[49] Erasmus spent several months at Oxford. Here he lived with the Augustinian Canons Regular (his own order) and had the opportunity to meet John Colet.[50]

Erasmus' letters written in Oxford suggest that discussions about the Bible may well have been frequent, sometimes incidental, sometimes

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42 Cf Ep 33 introduction.
43 Cf Ep 43 introduction.
44 Cf the correspondence between Erasmus and Robert Gaguin in the autumn of 1495, Epp 43–6; also Ep 49:69–74.
45 Cf Ep 48 introduction.
46 Cf Ep 64. Erasmus was absent from Paris for a short period in early 1499 when he returned once again to the Netherlands.
47 Cf Epp 1996:14–21 and 2283:11–14; also CEBR I 158.
48 Cf Ep 103 introduction.
49 For the case of treason that motivated the proclamation see Ep 108:119n.
50 The degree to which or the manner in which Colet served as the catalyst for Erasmus' biblical studies is open to question; cf Cornelis Augustijn *Erasmus: His Life, Works, and Influence* trans J.C. Grayson (Toronto 1991) 32–3; John B. Gleason *John Colet* (Berkeley 1989) 112–14; and Albert Rabil *Erasmus and the New Testament: The Mind of a Christian Humanist* (Lanham md 1993 [repr]) 38–46. Rabil offers a review of the question, for which see 39–40 n8.

passionate. Two letters are especially noteworthy. In letter 116 Erasmus describes a conversation at a dinner party – 'a true feast of reason … pleasant, civilized, delicious.'[51] The participants included the prior of the house of the Augustinians, a theologian, a lawyer, also the host, John Colet, that 'champion of the ancient theology,'[52] and Erasmus, who styles himself a poet – appropriately, for he will soon calm the growing turbulence of the debate by a poetic tale. If the account foreshadows the idealized dinner parties of the later *Colloquies*, it is significant also for its characterization of the contrasting (or complementary) methods applied to exegetical discussion: the theologian applied 'syllogistic logic,' while Erasmus 'employed the methods of rhetoric.'[53]

In letter 111 Erasmus concludes a discussion in which he and John Colet were engaged concerning the biblical account of the agony of Christ in Gethsemane. In this letter Erasmus illustrates the methods of the rhetorician applied to Scripture. A brief 'premunition' [54] concludes with the age-old division of the argumentation into inartificial proofs (authorities, witnesses) and artificial (rational) proofs, such as could be derived from conjecture.[55] Later Erasmus speaks of developing the case 'in the manner of a rhetorician'[56] and notes a method of proof 'familiar to rhetorician and logician alike.'[57] He defines the chief point in the debate as a 'conjectural issue'[58] and, using the narrative of Scripture, proceeds to reconstruct the event as one would in a case based on conjecture. The ensuing reconstruction yields the convincing result that 'no preceding or simultaneous or subsequent fact gives occasion for even the shadow of any such inference,'[59] the inference, that is, that in his prayer in Gethsemane Christ agonized not over his impending death but over the destruction of the Jews that his death would entail – the position Colet maintained.

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51 Ep 116:3–4
52 Ep 116:14–15
53 Ep 116:30–1
54 The premunition was a 'preliminary defence,' clearing away preliminary obstacles to the main argument.
55 Ep 111:40–4
56 Ep 111:138
57 Ep 111:201–2
58 Ep 111:79. Classical rhetoric designated three fundamental 'issues' or 'bases' to which all cases could be reduced: conjecture (did the alleged action happen?), definition (how is the action to be defined?), and quality (what is its nature?); cf Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 3.6.
59 Ep 111:102–4

Letter 111 was preceded by letter 109.[60] The two letters taken together offer a preview of several features that have importance in Erasmus' later biblical scholarship. In letter 111 Erasmus affirms the commonplace that will in time become a focus of debate, namely, that the Scriptures are replete with mysteries and possess a rich abundance of meaning.[61] In letter 109 we find a confident articulation of Erasmus' abiding belief in the humanity of Christ and a statement of the abject humiliation of Christ's humanity; later, Erasmus would explore in both annotation and published controversy the relation between the humanity of Christ and his humiliating death.[62] We also note that in letter 109 Erasmus attempts to clarify the biblical text in question by a lengthy paraphrase;[63] it is precisely what, in defence of his own work as paraphrast, he will claim the great commentators do. Finally, Erasmus reflects the philologian's sensitivity to the significance of a word. He calls attention in letter 111 to the 'delicate shade of meaning in the pronoun' *iste* 'this' found in the Vulgate in the expression 'this cup,' giving the expression the sense of 'this of yours,' 'yours' referring clearly to the Father, not therefore to the cup of the Jews.[64] Not surprisingly, Erasmus was still securely working from the text of the Vulgate; the Greek was not within his purview, but he found the exploration of the force of language an important means to the clarification of Scripture.

By February 1500 Erasmus had been able to return to Paris.[65] On his return he found that he enjoyed a distinguished reputation as a humanist, and his literary activity indicates that he was determined to justify the reputation.[66] By June he had published a book of adages, the *Collectanea*,[67] and

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60 The argument in Ep 109 is likewise based on rhetorical principles, though perhaps less obviously. The argument focuses first on the 'issue' of definition (in what sense could Christ's will both affirm and shrink from death?), then moves on to a topic appropriate to the conjectural issue, ie 'motive, in this case,' 'why did Christ appear to agonize over death?'

61 Cf Ep 111:17–18.

62 Cf Ep 109:124–38. Cf the annotation on Phil 2:6 (*esse se aequalem Deo*) and the *Apologia ad Fabrum* CWE 83 38–9.

63 Cf Ep 109:65–73.

64 Cf Ep 111:130–7.

65 Cf Ep 119 introduction.

66 Erasmus modestly regarded as 'exaggeration' the comment of the Parisian humanist Fausto Andrelini that he (Erasmus) 'alone preside[d] over literature's holy place' (Ep 136:7–8).

67 The idea of a book of proverbs was suggested to him by the prior of the Augustinians in Oxford and William Blount before he left England; cf Ep 126:23–5. For the *Adagiorum collectanea* see CWE 30.

he was working to 'finish off' earlier efforts that would contribute to a humanistic education – the *De conscribendis epistolis*, the *De copia*, and a work 'On Literature.'[68] Before the year was out he was 'preparing a commentary' on Jerome.[69] He began to improve his Greek,[70] for which perhaps the most immediate stimulus was his commentary on Jerome, though he had already regretted the comparative lack of Greek proverbs in his *Adages*.[71] In any case he recognized that an education without Greek was imperfect.[72] Indeed, already at this time he anticipated an image that would be echoed in his later biblical studies, when in a letter to Antoon van Bergen, the abbot of St Bertin, he compared the 'few small streams,' 'the few muddy pools' of the Latins to the 'crystal-clear springs' and the 'rivers that run with gold' to be found among the Greeks.[73] He had also come to see that biblical studies, too, required Greek. It was evidently in 1501 that he undertook an exposition of the Epistle to the Romans, but was 'distracted' because he saw that he 'needed the Greek at every point.'[74] In the letter to the abbot, he insisted on the necessity of Greek for scriptural study with a brief *apologia* that captured the essence of his lifelong conviction: the 'mysteries of the faith' could be disclosed only with a knowledge of Greek, 'since the translators of Scripture in their scrupulous manner of construing the text, offer such literal versions of Greek idioms that no one ignorant of that language could grasp even the primary or, as our theologians call it, "literal" meaning,' and he illustrated the point by the analysis of the Vulgate text of Psalm 50:4, comparing it with the Septuagint version.[75]

Erasmus had, however, returned to France desperately in need of cash,[76] and it seems likely that his literary efforts were in part driven by his pecuniary

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68 Cf Epp 138:136–7, 188–9; Erasmus speaks of the work 'On Literature' in Ep 145:179 (27 January 1501).
69 Cf Ep 138:45.
70 Erasmus claimed to have acquired a 'reasonable knowledge' of Greek while still a youth; cf Ep 164:48–50.
71 Cf Ep 126:105–12.
72 Cf Ep 129:77–8.
73 Ep 149:22–4
74 Ep 181:36–40; for the uncompleted commentary on Romans see 'New Testament Scholarship' 26 with n141.
75 Cf Ep 149:24–48 (for the quotation see 26–30). Erasmus never lost his respect for the Greek translation of the Old Testament. Even in his later scholarship he credited the Septuagint with considerable authority; cf eg his correspondence with Agostino Steuco in 1531, 'New Testament Scholarship' 344 with n1482.
76 Customs officials had confiscated nearly all of his money when he left England; cf Ep 119 introduction.

needs. In this period he was hoping for patronage from Anna van Borssele, lady of Veere, whose young son, Adolph, Erasmus' good friend Jacob Batt was tutoring. He evidently thought the Jerome project would please her,[77] and it is likely that it was with her patronage in mind that he published in 1501 an annotated text of Cicero's *De officiis*.[78] But Erasmus was ever open to opportunities, and one such arose when he was staying at the lady of Veere's castle at Tourneham for a period during the summer of 1501. A woman, fearing for the salvation of her husband, who was irreligious and cruel as well, but a friend to both Erasmus and Batt, asked Erasmus to write something 'that might get a little religion into the man.'[79] During the autumn Erasmus drafted the first state of what became the *Enchiridion*. Though he changed his domicile during the fall and winter, he remained in the vicinity of the libraries of St Bertin and the Franciscan convent in Saint-Omer, of which Jean Vitrier was warden. These libraries offered access to the works of the Fathers.

By September 1502 Erasmus, avoiding the plague, had moved to Louvain, where he revised and completed the *Enchiridion*. This he published in 1503 along with several other short pieces, as well as the *De taedio Iesu*, a vastly enlarged version of the debate with John Colet on the agony of Christ in Gethsemane.[80] Both have significance for the account of Erasmus' New Testament scholarship. The *De taedio* reflects the essentially rhetorical argumentation found in the letters to Colet, but the humanist orientation of the *De taedio* is rather more pronounced. Classical and Christian authors jostle one another in a manner that might seem a little artificial, even disconcerting. When the discussion turns to Stoic theory, Erasmus affirms the humanist conviction that 'if the Stoics have said something that is not too far from the truth, it does not seem incongruous to be able to cite it.' Colet, on the other hand wonders: 'What are the Stoics to me when I am discussing Christ?'[81] Erasmus'

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77 Cf Ep 139:50–4. In the same letter (c 12 December 1500) he expressed the hope that Antoon van Bergen might support his Jerome project, which he describes in some detail at Ep 139:165–72.

78 Intended for Adolph, Erasmus dedicated the edition to Jacob de Voecht when his hope of patronage from Anna was disappointed; cf Ep 152:7–10 and introduction.

79 Cf Ep 1341A:720–32.

80 The pieces were published under the title *Lucubratiunculae* (Louvain: Martens 15 February 1503). The *De taedio Iesu* appeared under the title *Disputatiuncula de taedio, pavore, tristicia Jesu* 'A Short Debate Concerning the Distress, Alarm, and Sorrow of Jesus' (translated in CWE 70).

81 *De taedio Iesu* CWE 70 35

growing knowledge of Greek comes into play effectively in the discussion of Stoicism, but, surprisingly, he still relies solely on the Vulgate for the philological argument provided by the Vulgate word *iste*.[82] As in the correspondence with Colet, so here Erasmus clarifies the intent of the verse by writing a paraphrase, but one much more expansive than that in letter 109 and more incisive, bringing to the surface the assumptions underlying the biblical passage.[83]

The citations from the Fathers are noteworthy here on two counts. First, Erasmus justifies abundant quotation by appealing to the rich abundance of the mysteries of Scripture noted in letter 111.[84] A single author might himself make a variety of remarks on the same point, while a variety of authors may disclose truths unobserved by a single author. Indeed '… it is important [in writing commentaries on Scripture] not merely to trumpet one's own opinions at all costs, but to say what others have thought … Ambrose and Jerome had a particular penchant for wandering through the various authors and, without risk to themselves, setting down the thoughts of others.'[85] Abundant quotation from a variety of authors will characterize the *Annotations*, particularly as the annotations grow with successive editions of the New Testament. We should at the same time note here that in his later explanation and defence of paraphrasing Erasmus will distinguish a paraphrase from a commentary chiefly on this ground, that a commentary can report a variety of opinions, while a paraphrase has no such amplitude but must be satisfied with expounding only one interpretation. In addition, we find here that supple, pliant, vibrant manner of citation from the Fathers so evident in the later *Annotations*. Not only do the Fathers come before us in a rapid succession of citations with the force of a swiftly flowing stream, but they also appear as participants in a lively conversation among themselves and with Erasmus and the reader. On the passage in question (Luke 22:42), Ambrose seems vacillating and confused; Hilary confronts the reader with a mighty indignation, calling it 'impious folly' to suppose that Christ dreaded death; Augustine is 'troubled,' and though he has a 'neat answer,' it is one that finds us 'still stuck in the same mud'; the reader shares the exaltation of the great bishop of Milan when he discovers in Christ's death 'the most wonderful evidence of his holiness and his majesty.'[86]

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82 *De taedio Iesu* CWE 70 18
83 Cf *De taedio Iesu* CWE 70 62; cf 12 with n63 above.
84 Cf 12 with n61 above.
85 Cf *De taedio Iesu* CWE 70 17.
86 Cf *De taedio Iesu* CWE 70 19–21, 51.

As an antecedent to Erasmus' later, more explicit New Testament scholarship, The *Enchiridion* plays an especially important role. First, it anticipates the *Methodus* and the *Ratio* in articulating and clarifying some of the presuppositions on which Erasmus' biblical scholarship rests. If the primary duty of the Christian soldier is to dedicate himself 'entirely to the study of the Scriptures,' he needs a 'preliminary training in the writings of the pagan poets and philosophers.'[87] 'These writings shape and invigorate the child's mind and provide an admirable preparation for the understanding of the divine Scriptures.' One must not, however, 'linger over them and waste away' in 'good literature,'[88] nor 'imbibe pagan morals together with pagan writings.'[89] The value of secular literature for the enhancement of our appreciation and understanding of scriptural imagery is reflected in the *Enchiridion* itself, which models, perhaps more successfully than the *De taedio,* the blending of classical and biblical. Not only does pagan literature serve as a source for the illustration and clarification of biblical thought, but its truths may have authoritative value. At some points pagan authors are cited in the very manner of Scripture.[90]

The understanding of Scripture, however, requires more than an education in 'good literature.' When we take up the Scriptures, it is imperative that we approach them with the right attitude and pursue our study of them by the most fruitful means. We must understand that the Scriptures 'conceal immense mysteries in almost crude language';[91] they are like the images of the Silenus that 'enclose unadulterated divinity under a lowly and almost ludicrous external appearance.'[92] They must be approached, therefore, 'with respect, veneration and humility,' and only then will the reader be 'inspired, moved, swept away, transfigured.'[93] Here Erasmus will set in contrast on the

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87 *Enchiridion* CWE 66 33

88 *Enchiridion* CWE 66 33. The point is reiterated in the Fourth Rule: '… all learning can be referred to Christ … Yet do not allow [the study of literature] to go beyond what you think will be profitable to your virtuous intent' *Enchiridion* CWE 66 62.

89 *Enchiridion* CWE 66 33

90 Cf the citations from the *Disticha Catonis* and the *Aeneid*, *Enchiridion* CWE 66 81 and 113 respectively.

91 *Enchiridion* CWE 66 32

92 *Enchiridion* CWE 66 67–8

93 *Enchiridion* CWE 66 34. The necessity of a cautious and humble approach to the Scriptures receives pictorial expression in the image of the doorway: 'The doorway is low' *Enchiridion* CWE 66 34. Erasmus repeated the imagery and the sentiment in *Ratio* 493; cf 493 n23.

one hand the jejune reading of the Scriptures offered by the 'modern theologians,' the neoterics, and on the other hand the manifold richness found in the commentaries of the Fathers, his preference for the latter justified by both the style and the interpretation one meets in patristic writings.[94] Their 'figurative mode of expression,' their 'frequent use of allegory,' were very close to the language of Sacred Scripture. The Fathers knew how to adorn and enrich arid and tedious subjects by their eloquent command of language. 'Mystical exegesis' must be 'seasoned with the powers of eloquence and a certain gracefulness of style' that is found in the ancients.[95] In eloquence resided a force complementary to the power of Scripture to 'inspire, sweep away, transfigure.'

Thus some fundamental principles of Erasmian biblical scholarship are set out in the *Enchiridion*. Several other features are also adumbrated. If the rich and plentiful use of allegory here finds little place in the later philologically oriented *Annotations*, Erasmus never lost confidence in its value as a hermeneutical method. His discussion of allegory in the *Ratio*, and much later, indeed at almost the end of his life, in the *Ecclesiastes*, witnesses to the value he placed upon it, as does his increasingly prevalent appropriation of the method in his *Paraphrases* on the Gospels. Also in the *Enchiridion* Erasmus enunciates the principle of the centrality of Christ in the study of Scripture: Christ is the *scopus*, the goal.[96] It is the mind of Christ that 'has been reproduced in the Gospels through the artistry of the Holy Spirit,' and it is upon this image, 'the sanctuary of [Christ's] most holy mind,' that we gaze when we 'read [his] oracles.'[97] The contrast so significant in the *Ratio* between the two great virtues of faith and charity and the vices – diseases of the mind – are foreshadowed in the *Enchiridion* particularly in the Sixth Rule and the concluding 'Remedies against certain special vices.' In the *Enchiridion* Erasmus also articulates the principle of 'divine accommodation,' so crucial to his explanation of the character of Holy Writ: 'The divine Spirit has his own peculiar language and modes of speech, which you must learn through careful observation. Divine Wisdom speaks to us in baby-talk and like a loving mother accommodates its words to our state of infancy.'[98]

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94 Cf *Enchiridion* CWE 66 34–5.
95 *Enchiridion* CWE 66 69
96 *Enchiridion* CWE 66 63
97 *Enchiridion* CWE 66 72–3
98 *Enchiridion* CWE 66 35

Erasmus resided in Louvain from the autumn of 1502 to that of 1504. Though still in need of money, he turned down an invitation to lecture at the University of Louvain and hoped to find opportunities to secure patronage. Jean Desmarez, public orator at the university and Erasmus' host, urged him to look to Nicolas Ruistre, bishop of Arras and chancellor of the university. Hence Erasmus dedicated to him his first published text and translation from Greek to Latin – three declamations of Libanius. In his dedicatory letter, Erasmus noted the chancellor's affection for 'men of high moral character or scholarship' and 'his practice of affording such persons extremely generous help.'[99] It was presumably because of Erasmus' rhetorical gifts that Desmarez also recommended him to write a panegyric for Philip, duke of Burgundy and son of the emperor Maximilian, when Philip returned from Spain to Brabant.[100] The composition succeeded in winning a significant gift from Philip and was published in February 1504.[101]

Another event occurred during Erasmus' residence in Louvain that proved to be opportune for his later biblical scholarship. Searching for unpublished manuscripts, especially ancient manuscripts, was an activity clearly encouraged by the humanist commitment to the classics. Years before, Erasmus had found a copy of Augustine's *De doctrina christiana* in a library near Bergen, which he had used abundantly in drafting the *Antibarbari*. During the summer of 1504 Erasmus made a striking discovery: not an ancient manuscript, to be sure, but a manuscript from the fifteenth century of a composition by Lorenzo Valla, whose work on Latin diction, the *Elegantiae*, Erasmus had abbreviated while still at Steyn. The new discovery was a manuscript of Valla's philological notes on the New Testament, in which the Latin of the Vulgate Bible had been compared with the Greek

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99 Ep 177:46–8. As a humanist, and one in need of patronage, Erasmus continued to make translations from Greek pagan authors for many years. His theory of translation, of some interest for his biblical scholarship, reflects his commitment to transferring 'precise meaning' from one language to another. As he continued to translate, he saw that this could, however, be achieved by a freedom that fell short of paraphrase. Cf Epp 177:110–18, 187:34–5, 188:51–79, 208:10–15; and for a general study see Erika Rummel *Erasmus as a Translator of the Classics* Erasmus Studies 7 (Toronto 1985).

100 The *Panegyricus*, like the translations from Libanius, was dedicated to Nicolas Ruistre (Ep 179) with a complimentary 'Afterward' for Desmarez (Ep 180). In Ep 180:194–205 Erasmus describes Desmarez' role in the composition of the *Panegyricus*.

101 Cf Ep 180 introduction and CWE 27 3.

text.[102] Erasmus took immediate advantage of what both 'luck'[103] and his humanist instinct had offered him, and returning to Paris, he published the work in 1505, giving the work his own title, the *Annotationes*.[104]

Erasmus' choice of title is by no means insignificant. We should not, however, overestimate the importance of this discovery for Erasmus' later biblical scholarship. The publication of notes in various styles was familiar from antiquity. Moreover, Erasmus' annotations on the New Testament, even in his first edition, were very different from Valla's spare and sparse notes: more extensive, fuller, more explicative in their philology, more dramatic, more pervasively charged with the voices and the portraiture of the moral character of individuals. There is, further, no indication that the dramatic discovery led to any immediate resolution to hasten to an imitative work; Erasmus seems to have begun serious work on his New Testament only in the next decade. At the same time, there can be little doubt that Valla's notes did contribute something to the first edition of the New Testament; certainly Valla became – through his notes, spare though they were – one of the interesting personae of Erasmus' *Annotations*. Other features may not have required Valla, but they suggest Valla and his notes: the occasionally acidic tone in Erasmus' annotations, the disparaging comments on the 'Translator'

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102 Valla had prepared a set of annotations first in the 1440s, which he had called a *Collatio*. Between 1453 and 1457 he prepared a second version that, while still a *collatio*, differed considerably from the first. It was the later redaction that Erasmus found. For the relation of the two sets of annotations see Alessandro Perosa ed *Lorenzo Valla Collatio Novi Testamenti, redazione inedita* Istituto nazionale di studi sul rinascimento, Studi e testi 1 (Florence 1970) xxiii–l. Valla had collated 'at least seven Greek and four Latin manuscripts of the New Testament'; cf Bentley *Humanists* 34–8.

103 Cf Ep 182:5.

104 Officially Erasmus gave the publication the title *Laurentii Vallensis viri tam Graecae quam Latinae linguae peritissimi in Latinam Novi Testamenti interpretationem ex collatione Graecorum exemplarium adnotationes apprime utiles* 'The Very Useful Annotations on the Latin Translation of the New Testament, prepared by Lorenzo Valla, an Expert in both the Greek and Latin Languages, on the Basis of a Comparison of the Greek Copies.' The book was published by Josse Bade in Paris; cf Ep 2172:15–17 with n4. Erasmus' edition was published again by Andreas Cratander (Basel 1526) (cf Alessandro Perosa ed *Lorenzo Valla Collatio Novi Testamenti, redazione inedita* Istituto nazionale di studi sul rinascimento, Studi e testi 1 (Florence 1970) x n2), and remained virtually unchanged in the edition published by Henricus Petrus (Basel 1540), including Erasmus' dedicatory letter to Robert Fisher. The 1540 edition was reprinted with introduction in Lorenzo Valla *Opera omnia* ed Eugenio Garin, 2 vols (Turin 1962) I.

of the Vulgate, and the correction of the Vulgate by comparison with Greek codices. And without question Erasmus cited Valla, sometimes explicitly, sometimes without due credit given.[105]

Erasmus dedicated this edition of Valla to Christopher Fisher, an Englishman and protonotary apostolic, who was resident in Paris in 1504–5 and was Erasmus' host. In his dedicatory letter Erasmus articulated the fundamental principles that will underlie his later New Testament scholarship. First, the Greek manuscripts, representing the original texts in which the New Testament was written, must take precedence over the Latin.[106] Second, the translation of the Scriptures is a task uniquely appropriate to the grammarian. Grammar is theology's 'humble attendant,' but 'no help is more indispensable than hers.'[107] Third, Erasmus pointed to the important corollary that translation is the result not of the 'inspiration of the Spirit' but of vigorous work by trained philologians. Here Erasmus articulated a principle he would repeatedly affirm, though in modified form, when the role of the Holy Spirit in the production of the Vulgate later became a focus of intense concern in debates with critics.[108] Fourth, the Scriptures can be corrupted, as Jerome's version of the Vulgate manifestly attests; it is better to amend a corrupt text than to continue to expound from a corrupt text the mysteries contained in the corruptions![109] To justify the primary role of Greek implied in these principles, Erasmus appealed to the Council of Vienne that had called for the teaching of languages for the conversion of the heathen.[110]

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105 For Valla as a persona to whose comments Erasmus did not always give due credit see 'New Testament Scholarship' 83 with n337. In this volume (CWE 41) when 'translator' refers to this 'unknown translator' of the Vulgate, the word is capitalized.

106 Cf Ep 182:135–8, 191–4.

107 Ep 182:149–51

108 Cf Ep 182:153–64. In debates with later critics Erasmus recognized that the translator of Scripture played a cooperative role: the Holy Spirit might indeed inspire, while the translator practised his philological skills.

109 Cf Ep 182:171–8.

110 Erasmus had already in 1501 referred to this council to enhance in the mind of Antoon van Bergen the case for Greek, believing that the council had ordained instruction in the biblical languages: Hebrew, Greek, and Latin (cf Ep 149:51n; and for Erasmus' 'case for Greek' made in the letter see 13 with n75). In fact the council spoke rather of Hebrew, Arabic, and Chaldean. When Erasmus became better informed, he concluded that Greek, originally included, had been deleted; cf Ep 182:205n. For the Council of Vienne (1311–12) see NCE 14 489–91.

In late 1505 Erasmus left Paris to go to England, apparently in the interest of receiving a benefice.[111] The letters from this period portray a man not galloping full stride towards biblical studies but deeply and comfortably engaged with London's humanist circle.[112] With Thomas More he translated several dialogues of Lucian of Samosata, polished the translation of Euripides' *Hecuba* begun in Louvain, and translated the *Iphigenia*. Hopes of patronage were fostered by dedicating these works to different individuals. Though no benefice was forthcoming at this time,[113] the opportunity arose to go to Italy, supervising the education of the sons of Henry VII's Italian physician. Departing from England in mid-1506, Erasmus stopped in Paris to publish with Bade's press the translations completed in London and to publish also a minimally enlarged edition of the *Collectanea*.[114] A few weeks' stopover in Turin finally brought the doctorate in theology he had so much coveted.[115] In late 1507, his contract completed, Erasmus intended to return north[116] but before doing so sought to publish with Aldo Manuzio a new edition of the two Euripidean tragedies published in 1506 by Bade.[117] The result was an opportune invitation to Venice, where Erasmus worked intensively for nine or ten months to produce a vastly enlarged edition of his *Adages*, his scholarship enabled by a large supply of Greek texts and a vigorous association with Greek scholars.[118] The work is noteworthy not only for the wealth of material it includes but also for what it omits, for Erasmus informed William Blount (Mountjoy), the dedicatee, that he had planned to add among other things 'scriptural allegories … found in the famous theologians of early ages'; but when he saw the 'vast proportions' of such a task, he 'cancelled the move.'[119] Still he had an uneasy conscience about devoting a great part of his life to an occupation that was not his, and he had every intention of discussing theological allegories in the future – when he had an 'adequate supply of Greek

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111 Cf Epp 185 and 187a.
112 Cf eg Epp 187 introduction (Thomas More), 188 introduction (William Grocyn), 194 (Thomas Linacre), 207:24–6 (William Latimer and Cuthbert Tunstall).
113 Cf Ep 187a introduction.
114 Cf Ep 1175:97–102.
115 Cf Paul Grendler 'How to Get a Degree in Fifteen Days: Erasmus' Doctorate of Theology from the University of Turin' ERSY 18 (1998) 40–60.
116 Erasmus, with his charges, was domiciled primarily in Bologna from November 1506 to the end of 1507; cf Epp 207 introduction and 211 introduction.
117 Cf Ep 188 introduction.
118 Erasmus was in Venice from January 1508 until the autumn of that year; cf Ep 211 introduction.
119 Cf Ep 211:24–36.

books on the subject.'[120] In fact, when in 1512 he published the *De copia*, he claimed to have 'a short work … in hand on scriptural allegories.'[121] It seems evident that in 1508 Erasmus had in mind a volume that would function as a companion piece to the *Adagia* and not the beginning of a critical study of the New Testament.[122] Likewise the letter to William Blount (Mountjoy), while it witnesses to a sense of professional obligation to be fulfilled at the appropriate moment, does not suggest any incipient programme of New Testament studies.

Erasmus left Venice in December 1508 as war was threatening, stopped briefly at Padua, then moved south, stayed for some weeks in Siena, where he tutored the two sons of James IV of Scotland,[123] and eventually arrived in Rome. His meanderings were not without fruit for his later New Testament work. In Venice and Padua he would have learned of the rich manuscript resources of the libraries in those cities. On his way south he met at Ferrara Richard Pace, who was pursuing his studies at the university there;[124] when in 1519 Erasmus met Pace as English envoy at the imperial election, he knew him well and recognized that Pace was strategically placed to represent to his English friends his case in his quarrel with Edward Lee.[125] In Rome he became acquainted with numerous cardinals, all of whom welcomed him 'as a brother,' including Raffaele Riario, Domenico Grimani, and Giovanni de' Medici (later Pope Leo X), men whose support Erasmus would later seek for his New Testament project.[126]

Henry VII of England died on 21 April 1509. He was succeeded by his son, Prince Henry whom Erasmus had met and with whom he had exchanged letters.[127] On 27 May, William Blount (Mountjoy) wrote to Erasmus to encourage him to have 'the highest hopes' of patronage in a prince of

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120 Cf Ep 211:40–50.

121 *De copia* CWE 24 635:12

122 It is to be noted that in his introduction to the *Adagia* Erasmus provided a limited sample of proverbs from Scripture that are allegorical in character, CWE 31 13:66–81. These may well be, in part, the kind of allegories he had intended to include in his new edition of the *Adagia* and in the 'short work' of which he spoke in the *De copia*.

123 Cf Epp 216 introduction and 604:4n; also CEBR III 286–7.

124 Cf Ep 211:53n and Epp 968–70.

125 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 151 with n580.

126 Cf Ep 296:107–11. For the story of Erasmus' introduction to the vast library of Cardinal Grimani see Ep 2465:4–11, 47–8, and introduction; also 'New Testament Scholarship' 344 with n1481.

127 For the meeting see Ep 104 introduction; for the letters, Epp 204, 206.

'exceptional and almost more than human talents,' under whom 'generosity scatters wealth with unstinting hand,' who himself 'longed to be a more accomplished scholar.'[128] A letter from Archbishop William Warham glowed with promise: '… on your first arrival in England you will receive from me a hundred and fifty nobles, on condition only that you agree to spend the rest of your life in England.'[129] To such promises Erasmus responded with alacrity; this appeared as an opportunity not to be missed, and he left Rome for England probably in mid-July.[130]

Erasmus was resident in England from the summer of 1509 to the summer of 1514. Unfortunately, letters are not extant for the period from his arrival until the spring of 1511; when the letters resume, the first is dated 10 April. From this time until the summer of 1512 the letters reflect the broad interests of a humanist with a theological bent. In the summer of 1511 he took up a lectureship that had been created for him at Cambridge. In August he humoured John Colet by suggesting that he might tackle St Paul. By September he had translated the 'Office of Chrysostom' and had begun a translation of Pseudo-Basil's *Commentary on Isaiah*. In October he was lecturing on Chrysoloras' *Grammar*, 'was completely absorbed in finishing off' the *De copia*, and was thinking of lecturing in theology; by November he had 'undertaken to expound' Jerome.[131] By the next spring Erasmus had completed the *De copia*, the dedicatory letter for which was dated 29 April 1512. A letter from Josse Bade dated 19 May 1512 indicates that at that time he was negotiating to publish the *De copia,* an edition of the letters of Jerome, an edition of Seneca's *Tragedies*, some dialogues of Lucian, and a new edition of the *Moria*.[132]

Perhaps Erasmus' most significant achievement during these years (summer 1509–summer 1512) was the composition and publication in 1511 of the *Moria*. Its significance reached far into Erasmus' future, for in subsequent years opponents persistently appealed to the *Moria* as a supporting witness to their contention that in his New Testament scholarship Erasmus

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128 Ep 215:5–6, 18, 21

129 Ep 214:3–5

130 Cf Ep 216 introduction.

131 For the sequence see Epp 225:22 (St Paul), 227:2 (Chrysostom), 227:21–2 (Pseudo-Basil), 233:10 (Chrysoloras), 237:2 (*De copia*), 233:12 (lecturing in theology), 245:5–6 (Jerome). For the lectureship created for him in Cambridge see *Ratio* 710 n1138.

132 For the prefatory letter to Colet see Ep 260; for the list of publications, Ep 263 with 3n.

undermined the authority of both Scripture and the church. Further, the *Moria* stands as a striking example of Erasmus' highly creative efforts as a humanist at this time to demonstrate poetically the possibility of a synthesis of classical and biblical imagery and thought. As in other early works, the 1511 edition of the *Moria* anticipates themes reflected later in Erasmus' New Testament scholarship: the criticism of indulgences, of superstitious practices among Christians and the contrast between such practices and true Christian worship, the criticism of theologians for their endless and vain questions, their failure to read the Gospels, their habit of twisting Scripture, their bad Latin and bumbling speech.[133] The wit with which these themes are expressed, though undoubtedly peculiar to the *Moria*, is nevertheless transformed into a provocative pungency of observation in the *Annotations* on the New Testament. The *Moria* also has a particular interest for us because of some substantial additions comprised of exegetical narrative in the 1514 edition that have suggestive analogues in Erasmus' *Annotations*. In many cases, but not quite all, the additions to the 1514 *Moria* find parallels in the annotations in the first (1516) edition of the *Annotations.* Thus in a long 1514 addition to the *Moria* (CWE 27 144–8) four biblical passages are discussed: 2 Corinthians 11:23, Acts 17:23, Luke 22:36, and Titus 3:10. These all find a direct parallel in the *1516* annotations.[134] The annotation on Titus 3:10 (*devita*) is only a brief sentence in *1516*, but in *1519* Erasmus added the interesting story of the man who misunderstood the Latin word, a story already told in the 1514 addition to the *Moria*. Two further small additions to the *Moria* of 1514 have direct parallels in the *1516* annotations on Matthew 11:25 (*quia abscondisti*) and Hebews 11:1 (*sperandarum substantia*).[135] The intertextuality here is indubitable; it is, unfortunately, less easy to ascribe priority. Further, while it is interesting to suppose that the exegesis in the *Annotations* represents work done in England before Erasmus visited Basel, we cannot exclude the possibility that it reflects the work of the first busy weeks in Basel when he was, as we know, occupied with the New Testament, since we also know

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133 Cf *Moria* CWE 27 114, 115, 120, 126–7, 129, 130.

134 In the annotation on Luke 22:36 (*sed nunc qui habet sacculum*) in *1516* and later Erasmus interprets the sword as the Spirit (or the Word) that penetrates the soul. In the paraphrase on the verse the sword is likewise the 'heavenly teaching,' a teaching that the Spirit makes present in the two Testaments, Old and New, understood allegorically as the 'two swords' of Luke 22:38; cf CWE 48 197.

135 Cf *Moria* CWE 27 127 and 148. Cf the annotation on Matt 25:11, where Erasmus explains 'babes' (RSV) as 'the foolish'; likewise in the annotation on Luke 10:21 (*parvulis*).

that the new edition of the *Moria* was not published until November.[136] It is, in any case, clear that the *Moria* of 1514 reveals exegetical work on the New Testament that is quite comparable to the finished work of the *Annotations* of *1516*.

## II THE FIRST EDITION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT (1512–16)

### Conceptualization and Preparation

We cannot trace with precision all the steps that led Erasmus from his first resolve to 'revise' the New Testament to the impressive publication of 1516, but from his letters a general picture emerges. It is a picture that must be drawn within a frame of four years more or less and oriented around two centres, England and Basel. Erasmus took up his position at Cambridge in the summer of 1511, and if we are to judge from his letters, he seems to have divided his time during the following three years (until the summer of 1514) for the most part between Cambridge and London: in Cambridge during the autumn of 1511, in London apparently for much of 1512, though a single letter attests his presence in Cambridge for some time during the summer;[137] he is lost to view for the first half of 1513, but we find him in Cambridge in July, where he remained for the autumn and early winter, then apparently in London from February 1514 until he left for the continent in July of that year. During this period his extant letters speak explicitly of his progress on his New Testament project only twice. In the autumn of 1512 he sought the help of his friend Pieter Gillis in his continuing negotiations with Josse Bade's Press in Paris. In these negotiations his particular concern was a new edition of the *Adagia*, but he mentions other works in which a printer might be interested; he intends, he says, 'to finish the revision of the New Testament

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136 Betty Radice in the Introductory Note to *Moria* CWE 27 81–2 observes that Erasmus' decision to recast large sections of the later part of the *Moria* made it both 'more satirical and more fundamental to [Erasmus'] work on the New Testament.'

137 We have no letters from Erasmus between 9 May (Ep 262 written from Cambridge) and the autumn (Ep 264 written from London). From Cambridge Erasmus made a pilgrimage to Walsingham 'presumably soon after' 9 May (cf Ep 262:5–9 and CWE 40 651–2 n7). We cannot determine how long he was in Cambridge during the summer of 1512.

and the Jerome; if I have time I will also amend the text of Seneca.'[138] Thus by the autumn of 1512 Erasmus had at least begun what he could call a revision of the New Testament. When the letters refer again in July 1513 to his New Testament, Erasmus, now in Cambridge, says that he has 'finished the collation of the New Testament' and is 'now starting on Jerome.'[139] We should note that in (lost) letters written about this time to Jan Becker, Erasmus apparently spoke in rather similar terms; certainly by mid-1513 he had written a letter to Becker in which he referred to his revision of the New Testament.[140]

From his letters we do not hear again of Erasmus' New Testament until he had crossed the English Channel on his way to Basel and had stopped at Hammes Castle near Calais to visit his patron William Blount (Mountjoy). Here on 8 July 1514, in an attempt to justify his absence from the monastery at Steyn, he recorded for its prior, Servatius Rogerus, his chief literary accomplishments. The list reflects to some degree a chronological order: the *Enchiridion* (1503), the Aldine *Adagia* (1508), the *De copia* (1512). Then he adds, 'In the course of the last two years I have, among many other things, revised St Jerome's Epistles … I have also revised the whole of the New Testament from a collation of Greek and ancient manuscripts and have annotated over a thousand places, with some benefit to theologians. I have begun a series of commentaries on Paul's Epistles, which I will finish when I have published this other work.'[141]

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138 Ep 264:16–17. In the spring of 1512 Erasmus was likewise negotiating with Bade for the publication of a number of works; strikingly there is no mention at that time (mid-May) of a revision of the New Testament; cf 23 with n132 above.

139 Ep 270:67–8

140 Cf Ep 291:2–5, 30–6. Cf also n148 just below, where the reference to work on the Gospel of Matthew might be understood as a reference to the scholarship on his projected New Testament.

141 Ep 296:161–7. Although Erasmus never produced 'commentaries on Paul's Epistles,' his work on a set of commentaries on Romans forms nevertheless an interesting part of the narrative of his New Testament scholarship. As we have seen, when Erasmus wrote to Colet in 1504, he claimed to have written in 1501 four volumes of a commentary on Romans, left unfinished due to his lack of Greek (cf 13 with n74 above). In 1511, now in Cambridge and writing again to Colet, he noted in a rather playful postscript that he might 'tackle St Paul' (cf Ep 225:22 and 23 with n131 above).The reference here in this letter to Servatius Rogerus reveals that Erasmus' interest and intent are still alive in 1514. A decade later the intent continues to be evident in the bibliography compiled for Johann von Botzheim in 1523 and published again in 1524 (Ep 1341A:1585), indicating clearly that in his mind neither the *Annotations* nor the *Paraphrases* had taken the place of the projected commentary. However it no longer appears

We have no solid information to enable us to indicate exactly when or why it occurred to Erasmus to undertake a revision of the New Testament. As we have just seen, the project was to some extent in place by the autumn of 1512. Erasmus' correspondence from Cambridge in 1511 is fairly explicit about his scholarly activities there: apart from the postscript indicating an interest in St Paul there is not a hint of work on the New Testament begun or intended.[142] Shadowy allusions in a letter to Maarten van Dorp in May 1515 and in his *Apologia ad Fabrum* (August 1517) suggest that Erasmus wished to give the impression that his New Testament project was in mind in some form by mid-1511; while this could be true, the comments may well be recollections to suit the occasion.[143] It seems more probable that the idea for what became his New Testament project did not begin to take shape until sometime in the spring or summer of 1512.

Later recollections offer some interesting accounts of his original intent, perhaps none more so than a statement in his *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* published in 1525, when he undertook to explain briefly the rationale for the New Testament project: '… as I wished to have regard for Greek literature, which had just then begun to flourish, and at the same time to set aflame a zeal for piety in those who were still engrossed in secular literature, I thought I should publish the Greek New Testament along with some annotations. I had decided to add the text of the Vulgate. It was not my intention to add my own translation, but some learned friends prevailed on me, and I followed their advice rather than my own judgment.'[144] In a letter to Noël Béda, dated 15 June 1525, he said, 'My sole purpose in the New Testament was to establish a pure text and shed some light on problems that had clearly caused many to run aground,' and he goes on to affirm

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in the similar list of 1530 (Ep 2283:43–242, CWE 24 697–702); in fact Erasmus never wrote a published 'Commentary on Romans,' though his annotations and his *Paraphrase* on the Epistle constituted in some sense a commentary on the Epistle. It is perhaps ironic that in his later years others looked to his advice or approval for their commentaries on Romans: Sadoleto sought Erasmus' help in writing his commentary, and Melanchthon hoped for his approval for the commentary he had already published!

142 For Erasmus' accounts of his literary activities during this period see 23 with n131 above. For the postscript see the preceding note.

143 Cf Ep 337:886–90 with 888n and *Apologia ad Fabrum* CWE 83 8 with n25.

144 *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 751D; for the context see the discussion below of Cousturier's criticism, 'New Testament Scholarship' 276 with n1163.

again that he had originally no intention to add a new translation.[145] While Erasmus' later memories are undoubtedly coloured by the rhetorical needs of the moment and by the product that was eventually published, we may nevertheless see an underlying truth in these statements, namely, that he was as a humanist eager to adapt the principles of humanist scholarship to a Christian context.

It seems likely that Erasmus' understanding of what such an adaptation might mean developed with time. 'Cleansing the text' was a standard humanist endeavour, and we may justifiably assume that when Erasmus had opportunely found in Cambridge and London New Testament manuscripts, whether Greek or Latin, he began their collation against the current Vulgate New Testament,[146] possibly at first with the intention simply of noting variants and egregious mistranslations in the Vulgate. In any case, we may further assume that as he collated he would have registered variants in the margins of his own copy of the Vulgate Bible, perhaps at the same time proposing alternatives to the Vulgate translation. In consequence of the December 1512 publication of Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples' translation of and commentary on the Pauline Epistles, Erasmus may have been encouraged to carry further the humanist practice of translation, extending the occasional translation he had already inserted into his text and making extensive notes that required pages to be inserted into his Bible.[147] The distress expressed in a letter written in October 1513 to John Colet over the feared loss of his 'Matthew' suggests that he had done extensive writing by that time,[148] and it

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145 Ep 1581:142–9; for a similar statement see the *Responsio ad Collationes* (1529) CWE 73 190. For a full consideration of Erasmus' original intent to provide a new Latin version of the New Testament see de Jonge *Novum Testamentum* 394–413.

146 The library of St Paul's Cathedral chapter in London provided two 'very ancient' Latin manuscripts; cf Ep 373:20–5 and the annotation on Rom 4:5 ('according to the purpose of the grace of God') CWE 56 108–9 with n5. Erasmus appears also to have consulted Greek manuscripts found in England, one of which has often been assumed to be the Leicester manuscript (codex 69) made available to him in Cambridge (cf Ep 384 introduction), but Andrew Brown in ASD VI-3 10–11 significantly qualifies this opinion.

147 Such was roughly the method he used (and described) in preparing his second edition; cf his *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 7. Such also is the procedure envisioned by de Jonge *Castigatio* 107. Cf also ASD VI-2 1–2.

148 Cf Ep 278:21–6: '… if [my Matthew] is lost, I shall blame myself and shall punish myself by the tedium of work done over again as a penalty for being obliging.' Cf Ep 278:21n, where it is assumed that the reference is to a translation of the Gospel made in 1506. But Andrew Brown has shown that Erasmus' first

has been argued that by 1514 Erasmus was thinking of his work as providing a new translation. Moreover, Erasmus' extant letters suggest that it was not until August–September 1514, when he met Johann Froben who was to become his publisher, that a plan was developed to place a Greek text beside the Latin translation.[149] Thus, while in both intent and design Erasmus' New Testament project seems to have taken shape gradually, we may safely conjecture that by late summer 1514 his own humanist instincts and the professional advice of others had led him well along on the road to defining the form and character that his edition of the New Testament would assume.

From mid-August 1514 to early May 1516 Erasmus was in Basel, except for several months in 1515.[150] He had gone to Basel to work with the Froben Press[151] on the publication of quite a number of works he had in hand in varying degrees of preparation.[152] Erasmus' voyage to Basel was marked by events significant for his New Testament project. We have already noted his letter to the prior of his monastery written at Hammes Castle in July describing his progress in his New Testament work.[153] He stopped in Louvain to give to Dirk Martens' press the copy for an edition of texts from classical antiquity. The edition included a poem 'Basic Principles of Christian Conduct,' written some years previously for John Colet's school.'[154] While he was in

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extant translations of the New Testament text were not made at that time; cf 'The Date of Erasmus' Latin Translation of the New Testament' *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 8 (1984) 351–80.

149 Cf Ep 305:227–9 (21 September 1514) and de Jonge *Castigatio* 99–110 (cf n147 above). Erasmus justifiably spoke of his work as both a revision and a translation. The Vulgate always remained the base for his Latin text, and while at some points he only slightly revised the Vulgate, at others he revised it so radically that his text became in effect a new translation.

150 In March 1515 Erasmus set out for England, where he stayed for several weeks and then returned to the continent, making his way back to Basel by July; cf Epp 326B and 337 introduction.

151 In the late spring of 1512 Erasmus had been negotiating several publications with Bade's press in Paris, including a new edition of the *Adagia*, an edition of Seneca and the letters of Jerome; cf Ep 263. However, at some point in 1513 or earlier the book dealer Franz Birckmann had taken Erasmus' work to Johann Froben in Basel (Ep 283:184–93) and so inaugurated what was to become the lasting relationship between Erasmus and the Froben Press.

152 These included the works that had been under negotiation with Bade (cf preceding note) and Erasmus' work on the New Testament.

153 Cf 26 with n141 above.

154 For the classical texts see Ep 298 introduction; for the poem, CWE 85 93–107 (with notes, CWE 86 505); also Ep 1341A:196–200.

Louvain, he met his old friend Maarten van Dorp,[155] and it seems likely that he disclosed his plans for his New Testament to his friend. Certainly it was within only a few weeks that Dorp, encouraged by the theologians of Louvain, wrote to Erasmus a cautionary letter that suggests recent personal conversation.[156] The letter would convey to Erasmus some of the fundamental objections to his New Testament project that would become almost standard among his critics, above all the assumption that a Greek text could have more authority than the Vulgate. In Mainz Erasmus had his first opportunity (he tells us) to read the controversial *Augenspiegel* by the German humanist Johann Reuchlin, whose case he would cautiously support against the theologians of Cologne, and who would become for him an icon of humanism as it was embodied in the languages and good literature against which the hostility of some theologians would rage. From Reuchlin Erasmus would soon seek a manuscript of the Greek New Testament.[157] In Strasbourg he was feted as the leading humanist of the day by the Strasbourg 'Literary Society.'[158] He had arrived in Basel by 14 August.

On his arrival in Basel Erasmus plunged into work on the New Testament. His first letter from Basel, dated 14 August, is, in effect, a request to Johann Reuchlin for a manuscript the latter had borrowed from the Dominicans of Basel,[159] and a month later he excused his tardy reply to his Strasbourg host, Jakob Wimpfeling, on the grounds that 'this labour of revising and enlarging the annotations which I have written on the New Testament kept me so completely tied down, so chained to the treadmill, that I scarcely have time for meals.'[160] Soon, however, other publications

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155 Cf Epp 304:9–11, 298:47–50, and CEBR I 400.

156 Cf the parallels between Ep 296:161–6 (Erasmus' letter to Servatius Rogerus) and Ep 304:90–7 (Dorp's cautionary letter). While the parallels may be explained by supposing that Dorp had seen a copy of the letter to Servatius (cf Allen Ep 2892:104–25), Dorp in his letter goes beyond the parallels to cite a characteristically Erasmian claim that he (Erasmus) was not condemning the Vulgate but translating the Greek (Ep 304:146–50), a point, we may conjecture, garnered from personal conversation.

157 Cf n159 below. From the extant letters it appears that Reuchlin had made the initial contact while Erasmus was still in London. Reuchlin wrote to Erasmus (April 1514) seeking support in England for his case; cf Ep 290 with introduction. For Reuchlin as a cabbalist, and Erasmus' somewhat ambiguous relationship with him, see the Translator's Note to the *Paraclesis* 388–9 with nn16, 18.

158 Cf Ep 302 introduction.

159 Cf Ep 300:33–8.

160 Ep 305:13–15

seem to have taken precedence. In October it was his work on the *Adagia* and Jerome that prevented him from replying to Udalricus Zasius.[161] In March he was writing the preface to his edition of Seneca, the *Lucubrationes*.[162] When Erasmus returned to England for a brief period in the spring of 1515, Jerome had become an obsession. He had sent on ahead to England a box with copies of his *Adagia* and all his 'materials for Jerome.' When he could not locate the box, he was in a state of panic: '… unless I recover [the Jerome materials] soon, the men who are printing it in Basel will run out of work, not without great loss.'[163] In May he wrote to Pope Leo x from London, seeking permission to dedicate to the pope his Jerome, which, he says, 'is being born again; in the printing house, moreover, of Froben.'[164] A letter of the same time to Cardinal Grimani indicates that Erasmus did not expect the New Testament to appear until the summer of 1516.[165]

However, shortly after Erasmus returned to Basel in late July 1515, the New Testament appears to have taken precedence over the Jerome. On 30 August, Erasmus wrote to Thomas Wolsey that 'the New Testament in Greek, as it was written by the apostles, and in Latin, as translated by me, together with my notes' was in press.[166] Printing seems to have stopped temporarily in September, but in October Erasmus declared that 'they have started on the New Testament at last.'[167] By December it was 'now almost finished,'[168] although it was still 'hastening to its finish' on 3 February 1516. On 7 March Erasmus wrote that 'the New Testament is published.'[169]

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161 Cf Ep 313:3–5, 7–9. In fact, the edition of the *Adagia* was published in early 1515.
162 Cf Ep 325. The edition was published in August 1515.
163 Ep 332:8–10; cf Epp 333:81: 'the work is now at the Press' and 337A:5, where the finish date for the Jerome is expected about 1 August.
164 Ep 335:312–13
165 Cf Ep 334:172–5.
166 Ep 348:13–14
167 Ep 360:3–4. The work may have stopped in September to wait on the correctors: Nikolaus Gerbel, who came from Strasbourg, and Johannes Oecolampadius of Weinsberg, who had been studying Greek and Hebrew in Stuttgart, and was consequently able to help Erasmus with the Hebrew; both were available by late September. Cf Epp 351, 352, and 354. Cf also the letter of Oecolampadius in 'Prefaces and Letters' 773–7.
168 Ep 377:7–8
169 For the dates cf Epp 378, 385, and 394. In fact, the final colophon of the edition is dated February 1516; the colophon of the *Annotations* is dated 1 March; cf Ep 384 introduction.

It is perhaps not idle to speculate about the reasons for the shifting position of the New Testament in the sequence of intended publications by the Froben Press in 1515 and 1516. On the one hand, at first there was apparently some uncertainty about an agreement with Froben for its publication: shortly after Erasmus arrived in Basel, Beatus Rhenanus announced an agreement, but eight months later he was still begging Erasmus to publish the New Testament with Froben.[170] On the other hand, when Erasmus arrived in Basel in 1514 and discovered the rich resources of the Dominican library there, both he and Froben may have recognized the need for more time to prepare the kind of book that could now be envisioned. That the New Testament suddenly took precedence over the Jerome on Erasmus' return from England in 1515 may reflect a sense of urgency for papal approval in light of the clearly troublesome criticism conveyed by the letter of Maarten van Dorp (September 1514), which, as it happened, Erasmus did not receive until he was making his way back to Basel in 1515. Erasmus had asked for approval to dedicate his Jerome to the pope, but, with criticism of the New Testament looming, it must have seemed important to transfer from the Jerome to the New Testament the dedication to the pope, since the dedication could be construed as papal consent. This required the publication of the New Testament prior to the edition of Jerome, which was not published until the summer of 1516, with a dedication to William Warham, archbishop of Canterbury and good patron of Erasmus.

**The Book: Formal Considerations**

The form in which the first edition was presented deserves notice, for while it established the fundamental structural design of Erasmus' New Testament, subsequent editions would depart from it in important ways. The first edition was a single volume with prefatory material, followed by the biblical text in Greek and in Erasmus' translation, and completed by a set of annotations. While scholarly interest in the prefaces focuses with good reason on three remarkable essays, the *Paraclesis*, the *Methodus*, and the *Apologia*, other short pieces were by no means of minor importance in the presentation of the book as a whole: preceding the *Paraclesis* was the title page, followed by

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170 Cf Ep 384 introduction, where it is noted that on 2 September 1514 Beatus Rhenanus 'rightly or wrongly announced an agreement' between Erasmus and Froben. For the later negotiations see Epp 328:36–7 and 330:2 (both letters dated April 1515).

a letter from Froben 'To the Pious Reader,' which in turn was followed by the dedicatory letter to the pope, then the three essays, and after the *Apologia* a half page printed in Greek on 'The Lives of the Four Evangelists from the Synopsis of Dorotheus, Martyr and Bishop of Tyre.'[171] The biblical text came next, paginated to divide into two parts, the Gospels and Acts (pages 1–322) and the Epistles with the Apocalypse beginning with fresh pagination (1–224). Since the Epistles were evidently printed before the Gospels,[172] this arrangement had a certain practical convenience, but perhaps there was an intention to distinguish the Gospels from the Epistles as sacred literature, and thus facilitate binding the text of each of the two parts separately, should anyone wish to do so. As we shall presently see, the borders on the initial page of Gospels and of Epistles likewise suggest this intention. The text was printed in two parallel columns, Greek on the left, the corresponding Latin on the right. The Epistles were each preceded by a Greek 'hypothesis' and the short Latin Argument, assumed to be from Jerome, that was commonly printed in Vulgate Bibles. To nine of Paul's Epistles a subscription was added after the last line of text.[173] The *Annotations*, preceded by a brief preface written by Erasmus (pages 225–30), followed the text and continued the

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171 Cf the annotation on Luke 10:1 (*et alios septuaginta duos*) where (from *1516*) Erasmus referred to Dorotheus as a witness to the reading 'seventy disciples' in the 'Compendium of Apostolic and Prophetic Events.' He spoke again of Dorotheus in the *Elenchus in censuras Bedae* ASD IX-5 170:177. Several people in antiquity are known by the name Dorotheus; one, a presbyter, was a 'forerunner of Antiochene exegesis and a procurator of the imperial dye works at Tyre' (Ferguson *Early Christianity* I 347). None is known as a bishop; cf Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 7.32.2–4. The very existence of Dorotheus has been questioned, even denied (cf ASD VI-6 178:31n), but for the work that circulated under his name see CWE 82 148 with n533. For title pages and prefatory letters see n178 below.

172 Cf ASD VI-3 5.

173 The Greek hypothesis offered a brief account of the setting and contents of the Epistle, commonly one-third to one-half page in length (the hypothesis to Romans required a full page). The traditional Latin Arguments were each a very general statement of context and theme, usually between two to four lines in length. The subscription located in just a few words the geographical origin of the Epistle. The hypotheses and the nine subscriptions in *1516* derived from two of the codices Erasmus collated for his text (ASD VI-3 6). Hypotheses and Arguments were not unique to the tradition of biblical manuscripts; hypotheses accompanied the text of plays in the manuscript tradition of Greek tragedy, while *periochae* or *argumenta* are found in the manuscript tradition of the plays of Terence. As a matter of interest, it may be noted that Erasmus (from *1516)*

pagination from the Epistles (pages 231–675). Space was given at the very end of the book for a letter of Oecolampadius 'To the Reader,' commending Erasmus and his work, and also for a list of errata, a table of the 'gatherings,' and the colophon.[174]

The first edition was by no means an elaborate production. The text of the dedicatory letter to Pope Leo was enclosed in a spacious and attractive, but nonnarrative border. The same was true of the first page of the Gospel of Matthew, while the Epistles of Paul began with a border coloured bright red, extending across the top but only one-quarter of the length down the side margins, just far enough to frame the acknowledgment of authorial responsibility.[175] Otherwise new sections were marked off merely by a figured horizontal bar across the page and the books of the Bible were separated in the same way. The divisions within the Latin column of the biblical text were limited to the traditional chapters, with very few exceptions. The Greek column generally accepted the Latin chapter divisions, though occasionally with some paragraphing within the chapters. Future editions would insert in the Greek column of the Gospels the much more complex chapter divisions of the Eusebian canon. However, in *1516* the Greek text of the Epistles to the Romans and the two Corinthians was marked by numerous paragraph divisions numbered in the margin according to the Greek numeration system;

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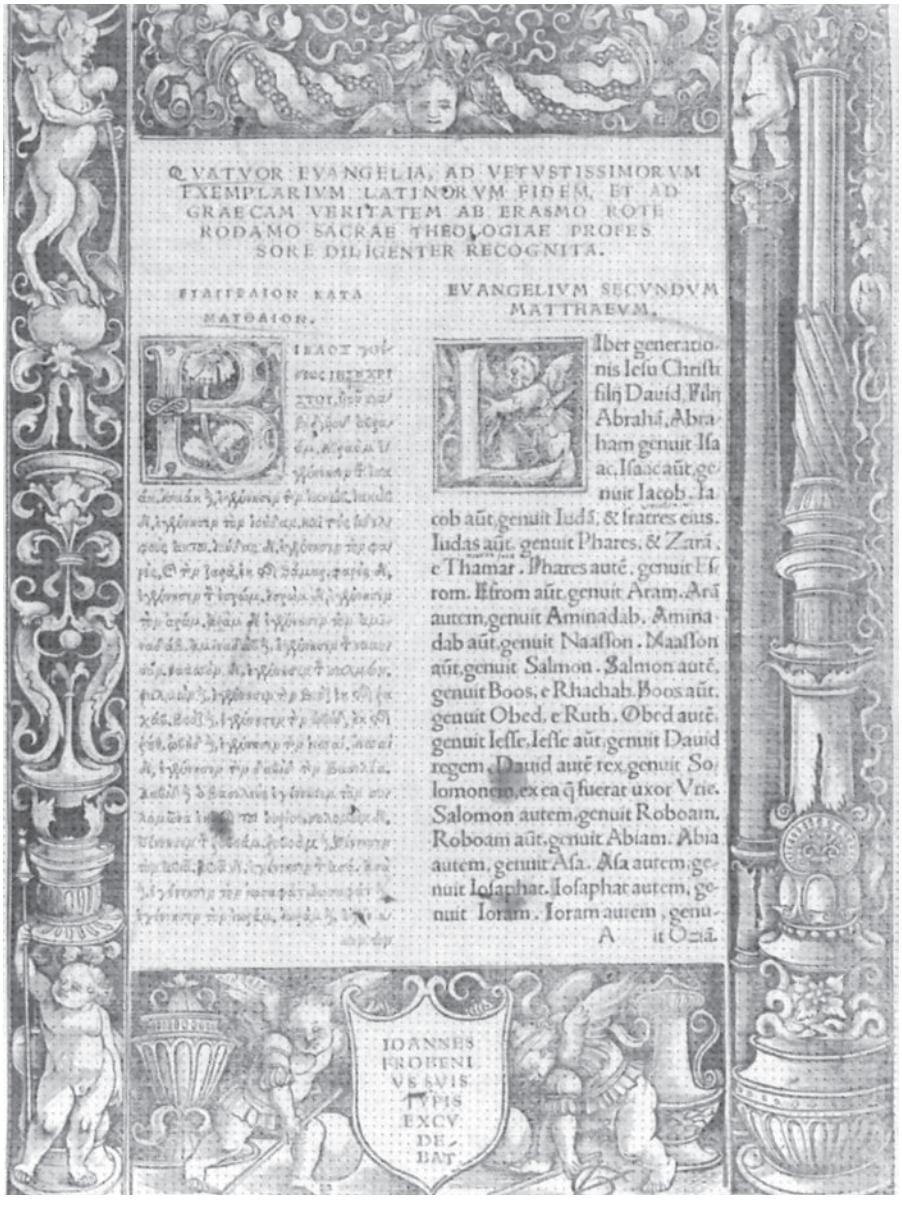
translated the Greek *perioche* in Acts 8:32 by *argumentum*. Cf L&S *periocha*. Here and henceforth in this volume, when 'Argument' is used as a quasi-technical term it is capitalized.

174 There is an omission in the page numbers in the second series, page 669 following immediately upon page 618, so that the total number of pages is not 678 but 627. Further, the pages with the hypothesis and the Argument that precede the Epistle to the Romans are numbered with the series on the Gospels and Acts. For the letter of Oecolampadius see n167 above.

175 On the first page of the text of both Matthew and Romans Erasmus identified himself as author and repeated the initial theme of the title page of the *Novum instrumentum* (cf 'Title Pages' 35, 36, and 743): for Matthew, 'The four Gospels carefully revised in accordance with the oldest Latin manuscripts and in light of the Greek original by Erasmus of Rotterdam, professor of theology'; for the Epistles, 'The Epistles of the apostle Paul revised in light of the Greek original and in accordance with the evidence of the Old Latin codices by Erasmus of Rotterdam, professor of theology.' The specific distinction between 'Gospels' and 'Epistles' reflects the traditional perspective that understood the two as a separate order in sacred literature. Cf the previous paragraph. See the illustrations on 35, 36 (borders), and 37 below (Greek hypothesis and *argumentum* to 1 Corinthians).


QVATVOR EVANGELIA, AD VETVSTISSIMORVM EXEMPLARIVM LATINORVM FIDEM, ET AD GRAECAM VERITATEM AB ERASMO ROTE RODAMO SACRAE THEOLOGIAE PROFESSORE DILIGENTER RECOGNITA.

ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ ΚΑΤΑ ΜΑΤΘΑΙΟΝ.

ΒΙΒΛΟΣ γενέσεως ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ υἱοῦ δαυὶδ υἱοῦ ἀβραάμ. ἀβραὰμ ἐγέννησε τὸν ἰσαάκ, ἰσαὰκ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν ἰακώβ, ἰακὼβ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν ἰούδαν καὶ τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς αὐτοῦ, ἰούδας δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν φαρὲς καὶ τὸν ζαρὰ ἐκ τῆς θαμάρ, φαρὲς δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν ἑσρώμ, ἑσρὼμ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν ἀράμ, ἀρὰμ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν ἀμιναδάβ, ἀμιναδὰβ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν ναασσών, ναασσὼν δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν σαλμών, σαλμὼν δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν βοὸς ἐκ τῆς ῥαχάβ, βοὸς δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν ὠβὴδ ἐκ τῆς ῥούθ, ὠβὴδ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν ἰεσσαί, ἰεσσαὶ δὲ ἐγέννησε τὸν δαυὶδ τὸν βασιλέα. δαυὶδ δὲ ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐγέννησε τὸν σολομῶνα ἐκ τῆς τοῦ οὐρίου

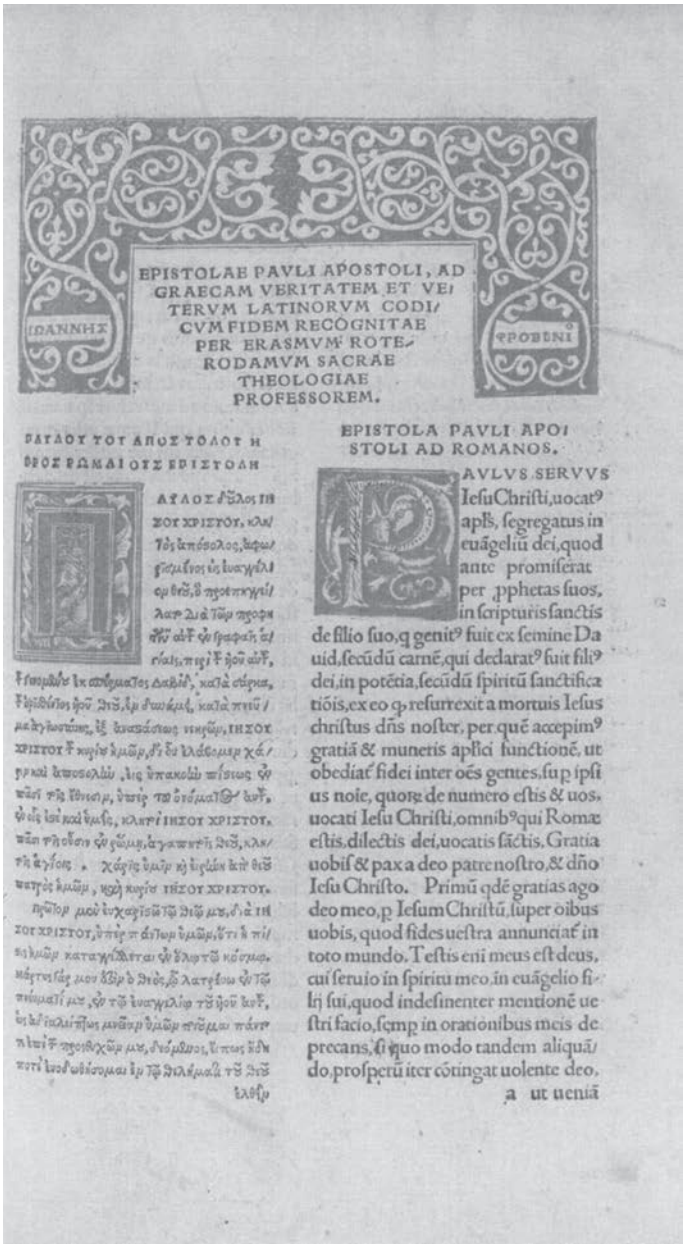
EVANGELIVM SECVNDVM MATTHAEVM.

Liber generationis Iesu Christi filij Dauid. Filij Abrahã, Abraham genuit Isaac, Isaac aũt genuit Iacob. Iacob aũt genuit Iudã & fratres eius. Iudas aũt genuit Phares & Zarã, e Thamar. Phares autẽ genuit Esrom. Esrom aũt genuit Aram. Aram autem genuit Aminadab. Aminadab aũt genuit Naasson. Naasson aũt genuit Salmon. Salmon autẽ genuit Boos, e Rhachab. Boos aũt genuit Obed, e Ruth. Obed autẽ genuit Iesse. Iesse aũt genuit Dauid regem. Dauid autẽ rex genuit Solomonem, ex ea q̃ fuerat uxor Vrie. Salomon autem genuit Roboam. Roboam aũt genuit Abiam. Abia autem genuit Asa. Asa autem genuit Iosaphat. Iosaphat autem genuit Ioram. Ioram autem genuit Oziã.

A

IOANNES FROBENIVS SVIS TYPIS EXCVDEBAT

*Novum instrumentum* 1516, Gospel of Matthew, first page with border



EPISTOLAE PAVLI APOSTOLI, AD GRAECAM VERITATEM ET VETERVM LATINORVM CODICVM FIDEM RECOGNITAE PER ERASMVM ROTERODAMVM SACRAE THEOLOGIAE PROFESSOREM.

ΙΩΑΝΝΗΣ

ΦΡΟΒΕΝΙ

ΠΑΥΛΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΥ Η ΠΡΟΣ ΡΩΜΑΙΟΥΣ ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ

ΠΑΥΛΟΣ δοῦλος ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ, κλητὸς ἀπόστολος, ἀφωρισμένος εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ, ὃ προεπηγείλατο διὰ τῶν προφητῶν αὐτοῦ ἐν γραφαῖς ἁγίαις, περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, τοῦ γενομένου ἐκ σπέρματος Δαβὶδ, κατὰ σάρκα, τοῦ ὁρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει, κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης, ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν, ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν, δι' οὗ ἐλάβομεν χάριν καὶ ἀποστολὴν, εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, ἐν οἷς ἐστὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς, κλητοὶ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ, πᾶσι τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν Ρώμῃ, ἀγαπητοῖς θεοῦ, κλητοῖς ἁγίοις. Χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν, καὶ κυρίου ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ.

πρῶτον μὲν εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου, διὰ ΙΗΣΟΥ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΥ, ὑπὲρ πάντων ὑμῶν, ὅτι ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν καταγγέλλεται ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κόσμῳ. μάρτυς γάρ μου ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς, ᾧ λατρεύω ἐν τῷ πνεύματί μου, ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, ὡς ἀδιαλείπτως μνείαν ὑμῶν ποιοῦμαι πάντοτε ἐπὶ τῶν προσευχῶν μου, δεόμενος, εἴπως ἤδη ποτὲ εὐοδωθήσομαι ἐν τῷ θελήματι τοῦ θεοῦ ἐλθεῖν

EPISTOLA PAVLI APOSTOLI AD ROMANOS.

PAVLVS SERVVS Iesu Christi, uocat⁹ apl̄s, segregatus in euāgeliū dei, quod ante promiserat per ꝓphetas suos, in scripturis sanctis de filio suo, q̄ genit⁹ fuit ex semine Dauid, secūdū carnē, qui declarat⁹ fuit fili⁹ dei, in potētia, secūdū spiritū sanctificationis, ex eo q̄ resurrexit a mortuis Iesus christus dn̄s noster, per quē accepim⁹ gratiā & muneris aplici functionē, ut obediat fidei inter oēs gentes, sup ipsius noīe, quor̄ de numero estis & uos, uocati Iesu Christi, omnib⁹ qui Romæ estis, dilectis dei, uocatis sāctis. Gratia uobis & pax a deo patre nostro, & dn̄o Iesu Christo. Primū q̄dē gratias ago deo meo, p Iesum Christū, super oibus uobis, quod fides uestra annunciat in toto mundo. Testis enī meus est deus, cui seruio in spiritu meo, in euāgelio filij sui, quod indesinenter mentionē uestri facio, semp in orationibus meis deprecans, si quo modo tandem aliquādo prosperū iter cōtingat uolente deo,

a ut uenia

*Novum instrumentum* 1516,
Epistle of Paul to the Romans, first page with partial border

ΥΠΟΘΕΣΙΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΡΟΣ ΚΟΡΙΝΘΙΟΥΣ ΠΡΩΤΗΣ ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗΣ.

ΤΑΥΤΗΝ ἐπιστέλλει ἀπὸ ἐφέσου φίλοις ἀσίας, ἐωρακὼς αὐτοὺς ἤδη καὶ διδάξας, ὑπομιμνήσκων δὲ ὑμῶν διὰ φίλης ἐπιστολῆς ταύτης. ἡ δὲ πρόφασις φίλη ἐπιστολῆς αὕτη. κολοβίθοι ἐκ φλογενίας σωαγόμενοι, ἐχρήσαντο ταῖς γνώμαις. καὶ λοιπὸν ἦν ὧν αὐτοῖς χίσματα. ἡδὴ ὄντων χισμάτων, παρεβλήθησαν τὸν λαὸν πλὴν μικροῦ, ἄλλοι ἦσαν καλαλιμπάνων τὰς ἰδίας γυναῖκας, προφάσει φίλης ἐγκρατείας, τινὲς ἢ ἡδὴ ὧν εἰδωλείοις ἐθίσαν, ὡς ἀδιαφόρων ὄντων τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων, ἄλλοι ἦ τὰς μὲν ἄλλας ἠρνοῦντο, τοὺς ἢ λαλοῦντας γλώσσαις ἐθαύμαζον, καὶ τὸ ⊙, ἐπάτλυτο καὶ ὡς τὸ περὶ ἀναστάσεως μυστήριον, λέγοντες, μὴ ἐγείρῃ πλὴ σάρκα ταύτην. τούτων πάντων ὧν κορίνθῳ κινουμένων, γράφουσιν οἱ λαοὶ ὧν ἐπιστόλιον, καὶ λοιπὸν πρὸς πάντα ἀντιγράφει, καὶ πρῶτον μὲν μαρτυρῶ αὐτοῖς ὧν φρονήσει καὶ γνώσει. οὐκ ἀποδέχεται αὐτοὺς ποιοῦντας τὰ χίσματα, ἀλλὰ καὶ συμβουλεύει μὴ ὧν λόγῳ πλὴ ἀρετῇ, ἀλλ ὧν ἔργῳ καὶ δυνάμει ἀγαθῇ. ἔπειτα ἐπιτιμήσας ὧν πλουτήσαντι, καὶ παρανέσας μὴ ἔχειν κρίματα πρὸς ἑαυτούς. λοιπὸν περὶ ὧν ἔγραψαν ἐποκρίνεται. πρῶτ μὲν ἢ γάμου διδάσκων ἄμεικτον εἶναι πλὴ συζυγίαν, καὶ ὧν καιρῷ μόνῳ χολάζειν διὰ πλὴν ἐγκράτειαν, διὰ τὸ ἀσπάζειν αὐτοὺς πλὴ ἐγκράτειαν. γράφει περὶ παρθενίας, ὅτι δυ καλὰ ἀνάγκην, ἀλλὰ θεοῦ τοῦτο γίνεσθαι. εἶτα περὶ τῶν εἰδωλοθύτων, ἵνα μὴ καταχῶνται τῇ γνώσει, ἀλλὰ τῇ ἀγάπῃ πολιτεύωνται, καὶ λύει αὖ τὰ ὧν εἰδωλείῳ συμπόσια, ἵνα μὴ σκανδαλίζωνται οἱ μὴ εἰδότες. εἶτα περὶ τῶν πνευματικῶν χαρισμάτων γράφει, ἵνα μὴ διαφέρωνται ὧν τοῖς χαρίσμασι, μὴ ἢ ποκρίνωσι τὸν ἔχοντα χάρισμα τόν ὃ τὸν ἔχοντ ⊙ τὸν. πάντα γὰρ τοῦ αὐτοῦ πνεύματος εἶναι λέγει. καὶ λοιπὸν περὶ ἀναστάσεως διὰ φάσκει, ὅτι ἡ σὰρξ ἐγείρεται, ἀποθνήσκουσα μοὺ φθαρτὴ, ἐγήγερται δὲ ἄφθαρτ ⊙ καὶ διὰ πλὴ τοῦ θεοῦ χάριν, πλὴ ἢ ἀνάστασιν, ἀπὸ τῶν ἐγηγέρθαι τὸν ΧΡΙΣΤΟΝ σωίσκει. καὶ τέλ ⊙, παρανετικοὺς λόγους εἰς τὰ ἤθη γράφει, καὶ περὶ λογίας φίλοις φύς ἀγίους παραγγέλλει. καὶ οὕτως τελεῖ πλὴ ἐπιστολήν.

ARGVMENTVM.

CORinthij sunt Ahaici, & hi similiter ab Apostolo audierunt uerbũ ueritatis, & subuersi sunt multifarie a falsis apostolis. Quidã a philosophiæ uerbosa eloquentia, alij secta legis Iudaicæ inducti sunt. Hos reuocat Apostolus ad ueram fidem, & euangelicam sapientiã, scribens eis ab Epheso per Timotheum discipulum suum.



*Novum instrumentum* 1516,
First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians:
Greek hypothesis and Latin Argument on page preceding the text

the numbering remained unchanged for all future editions.[176] The pages offered no upper-margin captions for the Gospel pericopes as would appear in future editions. Annotations were generally introduced by an indented paragraph and a lemma (a cue phrase) from the Vulgate; but often, following a single cue phrase, observations on several expressions were assembled together in a single paragraph, occasionally (and especially those on Matthew) joined by connectives, such as 'then, too,' 'moreover,' 'next,' 'soon,' etc, as though in an attempt to rationalize by a quasi-narrative style a grouping that was otherwise irrational. There was no subject index.

**The Introductory Prefaces**

The pieces that in the 1516 edition preceded the text and translation of Erasmus' New Testament constituted a well-designed whole in a rational sequence. Appropriately for an introduction, they indicate to the reader what can be expected of the book, what cautions need to be observed, and they justify the undertaking. Thus the title page gives a synoptic description of what the reader can expect to find, and the letter of Froben invites the reader to attend to the quality of the production. The dedicatory letter, next in order, explains in brief the nature of the book. The three essays that follow, however spare, are indispensable to the reader's understanding of the project: the forceful rhetoric of the *Paraclesis* proclaims the centrality of the Scriptures in Christian life, suggesting thereby the supreme importance of the book in hand and moving the reader to engage with the text; the *Methodus* offers guidelines for the effective engagement with Scripture, though it constitutes in addition a programme propaedeutic to a theological education rooted in Scripture; the *Apologia* anticipates criticism that will be directed at the book, in response to which the undertaking is justified. Following the *Apologia,* the 'Synopsis of the Lives of the Evangelists by Dorotheus, bishop of Tyre,' just a half-page in Greek, concludes the prefaces. This may have been in the first instance merely a page filler, but it is an apt bridge to the text of the Gospels and balances the Greek hypotheses and Latin Arguments that precede the Epistles.

If the prefaces function in the first instance as an orientation to the book, they also point decisively to the humanist intention that motivated and

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176 These paragraphs, marked by Greek numbers, derive apparently from a traditional text of the Latin Bible; cf ASD VI-3 6.

underlay Erasmus' New Testament.[177] The title page announces the work as a 'revision and cleansing' of the text, an emendation and restoration of an ancient text based on codices and witnesses, which as we have seen had become a passionate goal and standard activity of the humanists.[178] Froben's letter to the reader begins with a reference to the humanist's moral justification of the study of the classics: to cultivate good morals and piety. In the dedicatory letter to Pope Leo x Erasmus recalls the role of Leo's family, the Medici, in the spectacular development of humanism in quattrocentro Italy – a family, he writes, 'celebrated for the legacy of its eminent scholars,'[179] scholars supported by the munificence of the Medici, brilliantly by Cosimo in the earlier part of the century and later by Lorenzo (the Magnificent), father of the pope. As Erasmus draws the letter to a close he turns attention to England: under the fostering care of William Warham, Archbishop of Canterbury, that 'Maecenas to the humanities,' England has become endowed with 'gifted minds cultivated in every branch of letters.'[180] Several images in this letter place Erasmus' work ostentatiously within the framework of the Christian humanism he had espoused since his literary activity began. He modestly acknowledges that his work is an attempt to adorn the 'temple' of God; he brings not gold or silver, to be sure, but 'goatskins,' contributing what he can. His hope is for the 'restoration' of the Christian religion, for which his restoration of the biblical text is designed. The heart of that restoration is found in the pages of the New Testament, the written word wherein the 'heavenly Word' 'still lives and breathes … and speaks to us with more immediate efficacy … than in any other way.'[181]

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177 To speak of the humanist intention of the work in no way denies influences, sometimes subtle and profound, that may be detected in Erasmus' understanding of the nature and function of Scripture. See, for example, the Translator's Note to the *Paraclesis* 400 with nn23 and 24, where Ann Dalzell suggests the influence of both the *Devotio moderna* and Florentine Platonism.

178 In 1516 the title page named the work *Novum instrumentum*, in all later editions *Novum Testamentum*. The title pages for all editions as translated and annotated by Alexander Dalzell, as well as the prefatory letters, are included in this volume; cf 743–93. It may be noted that the title page of *1516* contained a 'Privilege' granted by the emperor Maximilian, for which see 745 with n7; cf also 'New Testament Scholarship' 225 with nn904, 905.

179 Ep 384:7–8

180 Ep 384:95, 98–9

181 Ep 384:35–51. Cf the *Paraclesis*: in the books of the New Testament, Christ 'lives even now, breathes and speaks to us … more effectively than when he lived among men' (417 with n77). For the images associated with 'adorning the temple' see n189 below.

The 'philosophy of Christ,' so effectively described and advocated in the *Paraclesis*, comes to us dressed in the colours of humanism. As a philosophy of passion it is introduced with a passionate plea for eloquence, for language that can touch the heart. Moreover, the winsome philosophy of Christ is constantly set against the dark backdrop of the scholasticism of the universities with their commitment to Aristotle and rational reasoning. As in the *Antibarbari*, so in the *Paraclesis* Erasmus speaks for humanism when he commends pagan authors as reflecting sparks of the divine truth, fully realized, however, only in Christ. The philosophy of Christ is, in fact, a 'rebirth,' a 'restoration of nature.'[182] It is a philosophy found in books, the sacred books of Scripture, because in the written word lives the presence of the Christ with transforming power. 'Therefore let us all desire these books eagerly … let us be transformed into them, since our preoccupations affect our character … there is nothing that would show Christ more clearly and more truly than the written Gospels … A statue shows only the appearance of the body – if indeed it shows anything of that – but these books show you the living image of his holy mind and Christ himself, speaking, healing, dying, rising to life again. In short, they restore Christ to us so completely and so vividly that you would see him less clearly should you behold him standing before your very eyes.'[183]

In an annotation on Ephesians 6:11 Erasmus defines the Greek *methodos* as *ratio … sed rei aggrediendi* 'the method [or system] … but specifically of approaching a subject.' If the plea of the *Paraclesis* has been effective, there is no need to 'urge one on who is already hastening,'[184] but one needs to know the way that leads to the incomparable pearl. The 'method' begins with the commonplace requirement of a pure heart and an attitude appropriate to scriptural study, features that find definition here by pointing to the scholastic debates of the universities as their opposite. The 'method' soon moves on to prescribe the three biblical languages and a reasonable knowledge of pagan classics as essential prerequisites for an effective reading of Scripture. It is in fact the commendation of the effective reading of Scripture that determines the prescriptions of the *Methodus*. For an effective reading of Scripture one must be able to visualize and respond to the text, must know therefore what the traditional liberal arts teach, such as rhetoric, music, the sciences, literary figures, and tropes. When these fundamentals have been learned in an

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182 Cf *Paraclesis* 415 with n64.
183 Cf *Paraclesis* 422.
184 Cf *Methodus* 424 with nn1 and 2.

essentially literary education, Scripture itself must become the constant occupation of the theologian: 'Let him engage in constant meditation on divine literature … Let him have the Scriptures always in hand … From Scripture let something always sound in his ears, or meet his eyes, or hover within his mind.'[185] If one wishes to seek illumination, it is to the Fathers, to men such as Chrysostom, Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine – golden rivers of reflection – that one should look, not to the worldly wisdom and crabbed logic derived from Averroës or Aristotle. This is the path to an effective reading of Scripture, effective because it leads us to the authors – or rather, the Author – of Scripture and so to the transformation of life. This is a humanist programme based on humanist pedagogical principles applied to the literature of the Bible to be read in the humanist manner.

The *Apologia* is intended as a defence primarily of Erasmus' translation, since what he has offered the public is an alternative to the Vulgate, but for private use. It is evident that humanist methodology has directed the enterprise. Though the Latin Vulgate provides the substratum for the translation, Erasmus notes that authenticity is secured by appeal to the Greek. Care has been taken over the construction of the text and the choice of language in the edition he is presenting. The Latin text has been constructed on the basis of the Greek manuscripts, the witness of citations in the writings of both the Greek and Latin Fathers (but particularly the Greek), and the practised judgment of the textual critic.[186] Propriety of language is paramount in translating into Latin: language appropriate to Scripture will not result in the grand style but neither will it admit solecisms, and here too one may look to the Fathers – to the Greeks for the connotation of the Greek words, to the Latins for the elegant expression of the meaning. In the *Apologia* Erasmus points the reader to the *Annotations*, where he has provided the information needed to understand his translation. The result should be that a reader familiar with good Latin will read the translation with understanding and with pleasure.

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185 Cf *Methodus* 447–8 with n108. Cf Erasmus' commendation in the *Antibarbari* of the liberal arts as a foundation for the study of Scripture, 'New Testament Scholarship' 7 with nn22, 25.

186 Much has been written about Erasmus as a textual critic; see Bentley *Humanists* 137–61; Craig Thompson's note in CWE 40 938–9; the Translator's Note to 'Passages Manifestly Corrupt' in 'Errors in the Vulgate' 902–4; and, for a highly detailed study, Krans *Conjectural Critics* 30–65. Throughout his vast work of editing Erasmus relied heavily on his own judgment based on probabilities in determining his choice of a reading. Cf the shrewd judgment of Andrew Brown, ASD VI–2 8–9.

Erasmus does not let the reader easily overlook the humanist orientation of this defence, for he begins the *Apologia* with an echo of the famous defence of Socrates: he admits that he knows nothing.[187]

The humanist intention of Erasmus' undertaking acquires a certain halo by the subtle effort in some of the prefaces to mirror Jerome. Erasmus dedicated his New Testament to a pope just as Jerome had dedicated his revision of the Gospels to Pope Damasus. Erasmus also followed Jerome, who had, in the prefaces and prologues to his biblical translations, attempted to justify his labours and anticipate the objections of his detractors, those 'barking dogs' who preferred the 'flavour of the old.' Jerome too had noted the varied readings of the manuscripts and claimed that the truth lay in the original languages. His work had been to restore what had been omitted, to delete what had been added, to clarify the obscure, and to disclose 'by pure and faithful language the mysteries of the church.'[188] He offered his translation not as compulsory reading – those who wished could continue to read the old. Indeed, certain images in Erasmus' prefaces echo Jerome with particular clarity. True to the theme already articulated in the 1494 version of the *Antibarbari* that one offers what one has to the temple of God, Erasmus, as we have seen, in the dedicatory letter modestly compared what others had contributed – gold, silver, precious stones – to the 'goatskins' that he could offer, an image Jerome had used in the prologue to Kings.[189] Erasmus has similarly recalled Jerome's description of his work as 'the restoration of the Old and New Testaments … for a world growing old.'[190] In this way the prefaces place Erasmus' New Testament project under the shadow of Jerome. The Hieronymian reference intended for the work as a whole and indicated by these prefaces will be sharpened in the *Annotations*, first by a feature that otherwise might seem intrusive, or at least tangential, to the primary purpose of the notes: that is, the careful investigation of Old Testament passages

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187 Cf the similar recollection of Socrates in the *Antibarbari* CWE 23 68, especially 12–14.

188 Cf the *Prologus* to Job, Weber 732. Jerome wrote prefaces or prologues both for single books of the Bible and for groups of books. Prefaces precede his revision of the Gospels and his translation of the Psalms and of Joshua; prologues precede the Pentateuch, Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Tobit, Esther, and Job. For the images of the 'barking dogs' and the 'new flavours' see also the *Prologus* to the Pentateuch (Weber 3) and the *Praefatio* to the Gospels (Weber 1515).

189 Cf Weber 365 and 39 above. For the image see Exod 25:1–8.

190 For Jerome see the *Praefatio* to the Gospels (Weber 1515); for Erasmus see the *Apologia* 465 with n52.

quoted in the New. But where Jerome had wished to demonstrate that the New Testament writers were following the Hebrew, Erasmus will show that, although the citations may in some cases be problematic, in many cases the New Testament writers were citing the Septuagint. Second, Jerome's commentaries on several Pauline Epistles are noteworthy as a result of the personal relationship the author establishes with his reader as he comments on the biblical text, engaging the reader by personal anecdotes, stories of interest, criticism of church and society – a striking feature, as we shall see, of Erasmus' *Annotations*.

## The Text and Translation

### *The Greek Text*

Though the volumes in CWE (41–60) dedicated to Erasmus' New Testament scholarship will not contain either the Greek text of the New Testament printed by Erasmus or his translation of it,[191] a few comments on both may serve to keep in view the relation of the parts of his New Testament to the whole. There is no indication that Erasmus intended to publish a 'critical text' of the Greek New Testament. For the first edition (1516) Erasmus, now in Basel, prepared two corrected copies of the Gospels and Acts for the printers from manuscripts at hand, but he seems not to have done the same for the Epistles.[192] In any case, his assistants took liberties. Johannes Oecolampadius and Nikolaus Gerbel, who were in charge of proofreading, for some time substituted a manuscript other than the two Erasmus had prepared, and, as Erasmus complained, 'changed many things in my text before I realized what they were doing.'[193] Indeed Erasmus, in his publications against Lee, frequently recurs to questions about his method and its problems: 'I do not profess to emend the Greek manuscripts; rather I translate them, and sometimes I translate a text of which I do not approve.' 'Though the Greek

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191 CWE does not undertake to provide English translations of Erasmus' Latin translations of Greek texts; cf CWE 23 xvi–xvii.

192 Cf ASD VI-2 6 and VI-3 5. For brief but excellent studies of the manuscripts Erasmus had at hand in Basel and his use of them see the introductions to ASD VI-1–4; and for a fairly full account of the manuscripts to which Erasmus had access see the introduction to Ep 384; cf also *Contra morosos* paragraph 41 with n117 below. For manuscripts used in England see n146 above.

193 *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 36; cf also *Contra morosos* paragraph 40 with n116.

manuscripts vary I could not follow more than one reading in the text, but put the reader on notice in my annotations.'[194] Thus Erasmus did not claim that the text he presented was necessarily at all points an authoritative text of Scripture. He presented the Greek text rather as the essential base on which interpretation must be established, since it was the original text of the New Testament, and he claimed, with some though not total justification, that his translation represented the Greek text in the parallel column.[195] The presence, then, of the Greek text was a symbol, humanist in inspiration, of the value of Greek in biblical study, but it was also a practical convenience for the reader, who could thus check the entire translation against a Greek text. Perhaps an even more important advantage deriving from the presence of the Greek is that the Greek text gives the reader a point of reference for the discussions in the annotations: in the vast majority of the annotations the brief Vulgate cue phrase is followed immediately by the equivalent Greek, often not much more than a snippet, which the reader could place in its larger context by referring to the full text printed in the the New Testament.[196] Beyond that, Erasmus constantly made appeal to the broader Greek text in his exposition of semantics and of sentence construction, and, further, the Greek provided a point of departure in the annotations for a review of both identical and variant readings. This is a feature of all editions, although in the first edition manuscripts have less significance in the discussion than they later acquire – in *1516* they are generally unnamed, and when they are summoned as witnesses, they appear as a source of information more than as evidence in a

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194 Cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* (Notes 13 and 31) CWE 72 108 and 129; cf Ep 1680:13–15 (15 March 1526): 'I had undertaken in the work in question [ie the New Testament] to translate the Greek manuscripts, not to correct them, and in fact, in not a few places I prefer the Latin translation to the reading in the Greek.'

195 Cf the annotation on 1 Cor 4:2 (*hic iam quaeritur*): 'I have translated what I found in the Greek so the Latin would not differ from the Greek.' Lee had noted, however, that the Latin did not always match the Greek text; see especially *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* (Note 59) CWE 72 164–5, where it is noted that Erasmus' Latin text retains the Vulgate of Luke 11:8a ('Yet if he shall continue knocking'), though it has no parallel in his Greek text. Cf *Contra morosos* paragraph 56 with n154.

196 Erasmus explained that the occasional discrepancy between the text printed in the Greek column and the Greek cited in the annotations was due to the fact that he used one codex when writing the annotation, another for printing the text in Basel. Moreover, some annotations themselves were written in England, some in Basel, with different manuscripts at hand. Cf *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae* ASD IX-2 120:260–122:267.

demonstration. As a result of controversy, in later editions Erasmus would appeal more demonstratively to manuscript evidence.

The Greek text Erasmus published differed at numerous points from the text underlying the Vulgate, and while any difference from the Vulgate was, on a high view of inspiration, not to be countenanced, some of the readings in Erasmus' text proved to be especially provocative. The Lord's Prayer was sacrosanct both as Scripture and as liturgy. The Vulgate did not include the doxology (Matthew 6:13) at the end of the prayer, but Erasmus found it in his Greek texts; accordingly, he added it, but noted that this *coronis* had been added in the Greek text of the prayer as a liturgical response in the Greek church. His explanation did not satisfy his critics![197] Additions to and omissions from the Vulgate text that seemed to bring into question orthodox Trinitarianism exemplified to critics the untrustworthy character of Erasmus' text: the omission of the single word 'given' in the text of John 7:39 offered a handle to the Arians;[198] the addition of the word 'wise' – 'the only wise God' – in Erasmus' text of 1 Timothy 1:17 proved also to be offensive.[199] The omission of the Johannine comma had grave consequences for Erasmus' project, as we shall see.[200] Additions and omissions like these would be listed in an 'Index' in the next edition, forming an extensive addition to the other prefaces.

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197 For Erasmus' response to the objections of Lee and López Zúñiga see respectively the *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* (Note 4) CWE 72 90–2 and the *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae* ASD IX-2 92. Cf also 'Interpolations' #20 in 'Errors in the Vulgate' 929 with n35.

198 The preferred text (ie the text generally preferred by modern scholars) reads (with Erasmus) 'the Spirit was not yet,' while the Vulgate reads 'not yet given'; the former raises the question of the eternal procession of the Spirit. Erasmus was still defending his text, with evident bitter feeling, in 1527; cf Ep 1858:1–250.

199 The preferred text reads with the Vulgate 'to the only God'; Lee thought the addition favoured the Arians, though Erasmus argued that on the contrary it was added by the orthodox to confirm orthodox Trinitarianism. Traditionalists would not, however, find comfort in the notion that the orthodox added anything to Scripture to defend their doctrines. Cf the discussion with Lee, *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 2* (Note 199) CWE 72 309–111.

200 Erasmus' text omitted from 1 John 5:7–8 the words following here in brackets: 'There are three who witness [in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one. And there are three who witness on earth], the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three are one.' For the sequel see 'New Testament Scholarship' 200–1 with n781. 'Comma' is a Latin transliteration of the Greek word, meaning 'a short clause,' the normal designation of the text questioned here.

But the text of the first edition is perhaps most famous for Erasmus' resourceful way of creating the Greek text of the last lines of the Apocalypse. For the text of this book Erasmus had only one manuscript, a codex borrowed from Johann Reuchlin, who had previously borrowed it from the Dominican library in Basel. The manuscript lacked the penultimate leaf that contained Revelation 22:16b–21. Erasmus supplied the lacuna by translating the whole section into Greek from the Vulgate (in verse 20 he did have the Greek wording in Valla's annotation). Erasmus admitted his procedure in the *1516* annotation on Revelation 22:20 (*etiam venio cito*). The admission caught the eye of Edward Lee, who thereupon compelled Erasmus to give an account (a little short of complete!) of what he had done. Although Erasmus' procedure in the last chapter of Revelation made for high drama, in fact Erasmus 'corrected' his Greek manuscript of this final book of the Bible in numerous places to accommodate the Greek text to the Latin Vulgate.[201]

### *The Latin Translation*

I have said that the Vulgate provided the substratum – the foundation – for Erasmus' translation, and that sometimes he spoke of his Latin rendition as a version or a translation, sometimes as a 'revision' of the Vulgate. In fact, from the first edition to the last, where the Vulgate seemed to him satisfactory, where he did not have time to change, or where he carelessly overlooked passages that his notes indicate he might have wished to change, the Vulgate remained as his text. In the first edition of 1516 the extent of the changes varied greatly. Changes are multitudinous in Matthew 2–20 and in all of Mark; there are relatively few in Luke, on which Erasmus, by his own admission, did very little work: '… sometimes I did not even compare the two texts [that is, the Greek and the Latin], especially in Luke, because I was in poor health and unequal to the various tasks facing me.'[202] Changes are modest

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201 For the story of the text of Rev 22:16b–21 as told to Lee see *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* and *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 2* (Note 243) CWE 72 44 and 343 respectively, where Erasmus gives the impression that he translated into Greek the Vulgate of Rev 22:19 only. Cf also Ep 384 introduction and Krans *Conjectural Critics* 54–8. For the *1527* sequel to this *1516* reconstruction of the text see 'New Testament Scholarship' 296 with n1253; and for a full account of Erasmus' procedure in the textual modification of the manuscript from Reuchlin, ASD VI-4 3–13.

202 Cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* (Notes 1 and 45) CWE 72 76 and 154; Erasmus makes a similar admission in the *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae* ASD IX-2 122:264–7. On Erasmus' version as 'revision' or 'translation' see 'New Testament Scholarship' 29 with n149 above.

in John, frequent again throughout Acts. So thoroughly is the Vulgate of the Epistles transformed that there the Vulgate base is widely obscured.[203] Given the scanty annotations on the Apocalypse, one finds a surprising number of changes from the Vulgate in Erasmus' version of that book.

In his translation Erasmus undertook to make the biblical prose more Latinate. This generally coincided with efforts to express the Greek with more precision than one found in the Vulgate. A brief review of some changes in Matthew 3:1–12 will serve to illustrate. In 3:3 the Vulgate had disregarded the Greek article and retained the passive form of the Greek, reading, 'This is of whom [*sic*] it was said by the Prophet Isaiah.' Erasmus translated, 'This is the one of whom the prophet spoke,' giving appropriate force to the article ('the one,' Latin *ille* for the Greek article) and turning the Greek passive into the more direct Latin active. He omitted 'Isaiah' because the name was not in the Greek text he printed. Erasmus frequently endeavoured to represent accurately the tenses of the Greek verb. In 3:7 the Vulgate read, 'Seeing many Pharisees and Sadducees coming [John] said …' Erasmus revised, 'When he had seen many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming, [John] said ...' The Greek tenses had indicated appropriately that John saw before he spoke; Erasmus reflected this in proper Latin by a subordinate clause that made the temporal relation of the actions clear. In 3:10 the Vulgate read the future tense: 'Every tree … will be cut down'; Erasmus followed his Greek text in reading the present, with a significantly different hermeneutical force: 'Every tree … is cut down.' He liked to reflect in his Latin translation the semantic value of Greek words, and he was particularly sensitive to the value of prefixes in Greek compounds: in 3:7 he replaced the Vulgate's *demonstravit* 'pointed out' with *submonstravit* where the *sub* prefix represents exactly the Greek equivalent *ὑπό* in the compound *ὑπέδειξεν*, with the sense articulated in the annotation on the verse (*quis demonstravit vos*) 'indicated (or admonished) in private, clandestinely,' a sense delicately different from that in the Vulgate.[204] In 3:4 Erasmus replaced the Vulgate's *esca* 'food as an eatable good' with *cibus* 'food as nourishment,' a standard classical word that perhaps better reflected the semantic content of the Greek *τροφή*. Reflecting precisely the semantic content of a word might at times demand paraphrase, as in the translation of 1 Peter 2:2 where 'milk of the word' becomes 'milk not of the body but of the soul,' thus clarifying here the meaning of the Greek *logicon.*

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203 The Johannine Epistles, only lightly touched, are an exception.

204 Although Erasmus' *1527* text printed the Vulgate here as the future tense *demonstrabit* (likewise the *Glossa ordinaria* published by Froben-Petri), the cue phrase in the annotation on the verse has the verb in the past tense (likewise the Clementine Vulgate and Weber 1529).

Fundamental to the intent of expressing the Greek with precision were two important principles. First, the translator must recognize that it is not words that are to be transferred from Greek to Latin but essential meaning. To do so might require a circumlocution or, as we have just seen, a paraphrase, and fairly often a disregard of the Greek form of construction. An interesting example occurs in Jesus' explanation of the parable of the sower and the seed in Matthew 13:18–23. In this notorious passage the Greek reads in such a way that seed and person are confused: the seed sown on rocky ground is the person who received the word but in the face of difficulties loses faith (13:20–1). Erasmus translated to create the picture intended: the seed sown on rocky ground is the word received by the person who later loses faith. Clarification of meaning here required that Erasmus depart entirely from the Greek wording and construction. In later debates this principle of the priority of meaning over language would assume a major position.[205] Second, the context played a significant role in the connotation of a word, which meant that the same Greek word might well require a different Latin expression in different contexts. Erasmus translated the interesting Greek verb *ἐπηρεάζω* found in Matthew 5:44,[206] Luke 6:28, and 1 Peter 3:16 with a different Latin word in each case, each particularly suitable to its context: in Matthew, where the context speaks of hatred and persecution, by the verb *laedo* 'harm', 'injure'; in Luke, where the context speaks of blessing and cursing, by the verb *calumnio* 'slander' (as in the Vulgate); in 1 Peter, where the context speaks of conduct maligned, by the verb *incesso* 'reproach,' 'attack.' The goal, then, was to express in good Latin the full and precise meaning of the Greek text. The annotations will attempt to explain and justify Erasmus' translation in terms of this goal.

Like his Greek text, Erasmus' Latin translation became a frequent object of attack. It was a fairly common cry, evidently, that Erasmus was correcting the Lord's Prayer and the Magnificat.[207] It was not only the addition of the doxology to the Lord's Prayer that appeared as a correction; people objected

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205 Cf *Contra morosos* paragraphs 28 and 29: 'Discourse consists of two elements, language as its body and meaning as its soul … a translator should aim at expressing the meaning faithfully in the most suitable language'; cf also paragraph 27c with n83.

206 Cf the annotation on Matt 5:44 (*pro persequentibus et calumniantibus*): the Greek verb is included in Erasmus' text, translated by the Latin verb *laedo*, and is represented in the Vulgate by *calumniantibus*; but in the preferred reading the expression 'and injure / slander' is omitted.

207 See *Apologia* n71 below for the extended reach of this criticism.

to the substitution of *remittere* 'remove,' 'forgive' for the Vulgate's *dimittere* 'dismiss,' 'forgive.' Otherwise, in fact, relatively few changes were made in the translation of this prayer. In the case of the Magnificat, a rumour was spread that Erasmus had changed the word 'seed' (Latin *semen*) to 'seeds' (Luke 1:55), a rumour possibly deriving from the change he made in Luke 1:52 from the Vulgate singular 'seat' (Latin *sedes*) to the plural 'seats,' in accordance with his Greek text.[208] In Luke 2:14 he construed the Greek text differently from the Vulgate and translated to read 'peace on earth, good will to men,' in place of the Vulgate's 'peace on earth among men of good will.' It was a change he would come to defend at great length.[209]

## The Annotations

### *Purpose, Genre, and Form*

Erasmus' *Annotations* of 1516 are preceded by a preface in the form of a letter 'To the Reader,' written presumably shortly before the printing of the *Annotations* began.[210] In this preface Erasmus described succinctly the function of his annotations: to restore the true reading of the biblical text 'after pursuing every available scent'; to clarify obscure, ambiguous, complicated and idiomatic expressions; to observe the 'differences between the copies or alternative punctuations' where these 'gave rise to several meanings' and 'to show which seemed to [him] more acceptable'; to point in a kindly but decisive way to the mistakes of the Vulgate; and, finally, to compare the citations from the 'Old Testament evidences' with the Hebrew and Septuagint texts. Erasmus also expressed the hope that his annotations would preserve his 'work intact, that it might not be so easy for anyone to spoil a second time what had once been restored with such great exertions.' He acknowledged the humble nature of this enterprise, but not without implicit irony, for he invited his reader to see in the unpretentious character of his notes a reflection of the Incarnation: in simple words, syllables, even the 'very strokes of the letters lie hid great mysteries of divine wisdom.' It is this principle that

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208 Cf Ep 948:99–107 and 117–19.

209 Cf the annotation on Luke 2:14 (*hominibus bonae voluntatis*) and *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* (Notes 30 and 31) CWE 72 122–7.

210 CWE dates the preface '[c December] 1515,' thus about three months before the New Testament was published; cf Ep 373 (printed in 'Prefaces and Letters' 781–92).

led the 'eternal Wisdom' to assume 'the person of a man poor and lowly, despised and rejected.'[211] Implied here is a conviction that will come to the fore in later discussions, such as those with Luther: the wisdom of Scripture is to be disclosed by the methods of the humanist, by the analysis of language in terms of grammar and rhetoric. Such are the goals, and such the potential of the *Annotations*.

In so far as we may regard Erasmus' *Annotations* as reflecting a literary genre, we may view it as a highly individualized representation of commentary traditions that have both classical and Christian antecedents. Erasmus himself frequently describes his annotations with diminutives. They are *commentariola* 'brief notes,'[212] *annotatiunculae* 'short annotations,'[213] *annotamenta* 'remarks,'[214] *velut indices* 'pointers (so to call them),'[215] by means of which Erasmus has 'indicated the point in as few words as possible instead of explaining it fully.'[216] In the *Apologia* he speaks of his annotations as *scholia*, and in the face of the hostile criticism of Frans Titelmans, whose scholarly pretensions he deplores, he will describe his annotation on Romans 5:12 as a *scholium*.[217] Elsewhere he broadens the range of connotation carried by the designation 'annotation.' He distinguishes his annotations from *dogmata* 'doctrines' and from *leges* 'laws.'[218] It is the role of an annotator to place before the reader a variety of material for his consideration, with the

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211 For the quotations in this paragraph see Ep 373:53–75, 126–30, cited also in 'Prefaces and Letters' 784–5, 787.

212 Ep 373:4 ('Prefaces and Letters' 782)

213 Ep 373:5–6 ('Prefaces and Letters' 782); cf *Apologia ad Fabrum* 'modest little notes [*annotatiuncula*], hardly more than grammatical points' CWE 83 15. In Ep 373:5–6 Erasmus distinguishes his *annotatiunculae* 'short annotations' from the *commentarii* 'commentary.'

214 In *Apologia* 472 (*Notes*); cf ibidem nn82 and 86.

215 Ep 373:49 ('Prefaces and Letters' 784).

216 Ep 373:215–16 ('Prefaces and Letters' 790); Latin *rem omnem … paucissimis verbis indicavimus magis quam explicuimus*. This characteristic, clearly discernible in the first edition, becomes less evident in the later editions.

217 Cf *Apologia* 472 with nn82, 86; and for Titelmans see LB IX 985A, where Erasmus refers to the *commentarius* 'commentary,' ie 'comments' in the scholium (CWE 73 187 'comment … in the annotation'). A 1532 reprint of the *De esu carnium* carries fifty-seven scholia – many of them short responses to critics; cf CWE 73 xxix and 104–34.

218 For the distinction between annotations and doctrines see the *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 48; the same distinction had been made in the *Apologia ad Fabrum*; cf CWE 83 15 with n50. Erasmus distinguishes annotations from laws in *Contra morosos* paragraph 2 with n11.

understanding that 'each person should be free to make his own judgment' and that since the annotator has a certain licence, his notes may make some claim to theological neutrality.[219] Instructively, he contrasts his annotations with the 'notes' in the *Attic Nights* of the second-century Roman Aulus Gellius and the *Miscellanies* of the fifteenth-century Italian Angelo Poliziano, both works memorable for their variety and charm. He admits that there is nothing in his remarks that have the 'intellectual vigour, the eloquence, the recondite learning of these men.'[220]

This deprecatory contrast with Gellius is not without a certain irony, for in the preface to *Attic Nights* Gellius describes his endeavour in terms that may seem reflected now centuries later in Erasmus' explanation of his project. Gellius says that from his reading and listening he would jot down whatever took his fancy; then for his book he selected only those jottings that would be genuinely useful for busy people.[221] He calls these jottings *annotationes* – notes made briefly, unmethodically, and without arrangement.[222] While he speaks of his published work as *commentarii* or *commentationes*,[223] the work has the serendipidous and desultory quality he ascribes to 'jottings.' Gellius defends his work in a manner not unlike Erasmus: his notes constitute the preliminaries of, the foundation for, a liberal arts education essential in the formation of a cultivated person. Granted, his notes may seem commonplace and trite, but they should not be scorned. He admits that in comparison with the work of others, his notes reflect a certain lack of stylistic elegance, and if his observations are trifling, they should not for that reason be held in contempt, for they will help to cultivate the mind. Let those who wish to criticize weigh carefully the reasons for what is said and the value of authorities followed.[224]

Christian antiquity offered an example of annotations in Augustine's *Annotationes in Iob*, the nature of which and the circumstances of its publication are described briefly in the *Retractationes*. Augustine described the informal, unmethodical origin of the book and apologizes for the finished product. The work originated in notes written in the margins (*in frontibus*) of his codex, presumably a codex of a Latin translation of Job. He regrets the

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219 Cf *Apologia ad Fabrum* CWE 83 15, 73, 76.
220 Ep 373:220–3 ('Prefaces and Letters' 790–1) with n44.
221 Gellius *Noctes Atticae praefatio* 1–12
222 Gellius *Noctes Atticae* 3
223 Gellius *Noctes Atticae* 3–4, 13
224 Gellius *Noctes Atticae* 10–18

obscurity of much of his commentary, an obscurity resulting from the brevity of his notes and the fact that others had compiled them. [225] Erasmus also regarded Augustine's book *In Heptateuchum locutiones* as essentially a book of annotations. Indeed in the *Contra morosos* Erasmus speaks of *In Heptateuchum locutiones* as a book of annotations and points to them as a precedent that validates his own annotations as foundation work devoted to the discussion of minutiae.[226]

Erasmus' *Annotations* also reflects a tradition of philological scholarship with roots in classical antiquity. The commentary on Terence ascribed to Aelius Donatus, who was a teacher of Jerome, was well known by Erasmus.[227] It was a philological commentary designed to facilitate and enrich the reading of the text. It addressed problems of sentence construction; it enriched the reading of the text with observations on word derivation, the proper domicile of words, distinctions among words – distinctions that bring clarity, precision, and imagistic liveliness to the text; it identified tropes and figures of speech to the elucidation of which it had an unflagging commitment. In his commentary Donatus also employed a characteristic idiom. Explanations are prefaced by *hoc est*, *id est* 'that is,' *ut sensus est* 'so that the sense is,' *quasi dicat* 'as though to say,' *intentio … hoc agit* 'the point is,' *posuit pro* 'he has used [the word 'x'] for [the word 'y'].' There are commonly used appreciative adverbs: [He speaks] *eleganter* 'with propriety,' and *mire* 'strangely' or 'wonderfully.' This pattern and this idiom of philological exposition are everywhere apparent in Erasmus' annotations.

Erasmus had outstanding models of philological commentary in the long tradition of Christian biblical exegesis. Erasmus was very familiar with Jerome's *Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim*. Jerome had written this book without any pretension to style or grace. His intent was to refute those who had 'suspicions' about the Hebrew Bible, and who insisted rather on the superiority of the Septuagint and the Latin Bible. Jerome promises, therefore, to explain etymologies, names and geographical regions, and to compare the

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225 Cf Augustine *Retractationes* PL 32 636.

226 Cf *Contra morosos* paragraph 84, also paragraph 33 n104. Likewise, in the *Ratio* Erasmus speaks of Augustine's work in this book as 'annotation'; cf 647 with n830. For the full title and a brief description of the work see *Ratio* 647 with n828. The title may be translated as 'Modes of Expression in the Heptateuch.'

227 For the complex problem of the authenticity of the Donatus commentary see James E.G. Zetzel *Latin Textual Criticism in Antiquity* (Salem NH 1981) 81–4, 148–9. Zetzel believes that the commentary ascribed to Donatus had assumed its final form by the ninth century. See further *Ratio* 509 with n97.

Hebrew text with the Greek and Latin to show that the Hebrew 'original' was in accordance with the New Testament citations from the Old, thus demonstrating that the Hebrew is the correct and authoritative text.[228] In fact, Jerome offers more than he promises: he compares various translations, notes corruptions in the Greek text, and analyzes Hebrew words to reveal, sometimes in a strikingly imagistic manner, their force – the 'wind [that] swept over the face of the waters' (Genesis 1:2 [NRSV]) in Hebrew evokes the picture of a bird brooding over its eggs, animating them with its warmth. Augustine in *Modes of Expression in the Heptateuch* had likewise addressed primarily textual and philological problems. This African bishop was acutely concerned with Latin idiom, he sprinkled his comments with the language of the grammarians, and compared Latin manuscripts with the Greek Septuagint.

In the Renaissance *Annotationes* was a fairly common designation for certain types of commentary. Filippo Beroaldo the elder (of Bologna 1453–1505) used the term to name his commentary on classical authors, in which his aim was 'to emend and restore to their true readings obscure passages in Latin authors … to correct and explain … passages that seem not to have been adequately explained.'[229] In Spain Elio Antonio de Nebrija (1441/1442–1522) claimed to have written thousands of annotations on Scripture, noting passages that had been corrupted by critics and copyists.[230] His annotations included comments on orthography, the identification of objects named in the Bible, and indications of alternative readings in the biblical text.[231]

Of other Renaissance figures Lorenzo Valla provided in the two versions of his *Collatio* a concise and sharply drawn model of the philological criticism of Scripture, rendered no doubt more effective in Erasmus' mind by virtue of the fact that Erasmus had discovered and published the later version as the *Annotations*. In fact, Valla's *Collatio* did not, in its essential features as

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228 Cf Jerome *Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim* 'On Hebrew Questions in Genesis' PL 23 936A–937A.

229 Cf *Filippo Beroaldo the Elder, Annotationes centum* ed with introduction and commentary Lucia A. Ciapponi (Binghampton 1995) 7; and for an account of the aim and method of the Renaissance 'annotator' see ibidem 15–27. For Filippo Beroaldo see CEBR I 135.

230 Cf Carlos del Valle Rodriguez 'Antonio Nebrija's Biblical Scholarship' trans Alejandro Coroleu in *Biblical Humanism and Scholasticism in the Age of Erasmus* ed Erika Rummel (Boston and London 2008) 63.

231 Ibidem 62–5. For Elio Antonio de Nebrija see CEBR III 9–10, where among other works are cited Nebrija's *Quinquegenae* (critical notes on Scripture) and the *De litteris Graecis et Hebraicis cum quibusdam annotationibus in scripturam sacram* 'On Greek and Hebrew Literature with Some Annotations on Sacred Scripture.'

philological criticism of Scripture, differ greatly from the work of Jerome and Augustine: textual comparison, grammatical construction, semantic study to bring out the force of the Greek and to determine its best representation in Latin. Valla also introduced into his notes several features whose potential Erasmus would exploit fully in his own annotations: the sometimes ironic, sometimes explicitly sarcastic evaluation of the Translator of the Vulgate; the demand that theological language represent correct Latin and that correct Latin be established by appeal to those who spoke the language first, that is to say, that the standard for theologically correct language was to be established by the ancient pagan authors;[232] and the occasional, if infrequent, reflection on the implication of a correct translation for Christian doctrine.

It seems certain that Erasmus benefited from the commentary of his contemporary, Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples, though how far the actual shape of his annotations was affected by Lefèvre's work is less clear. Lefèvre had published his translation and commentary on the Pauline Epistles in December 1512. He had divided the commentary on each chapter into two parts: the first part, often somewhat mystical in its hermeneutical approach, pointed away from the text to its meaning for Christian life; the second part, under the rubric *examinatio non nullorum circa literam* 'examination of some passages on a literal reading of the text' was an essentially philological commentary, explaining without pretension the proper construction of the text and the meaning of the words. Some of Erasmus' critics, apparently blind to the distinctive features of Erasmus' *Annotations*, saw sufficient similarity between the work of both Valla and Lefèvre and that of Erasmus that they questioned the need for the latter's efforts.[233]

A rich tradition, then, of both classical and Christian commentary essentially philological in nature and a familiar use of the term 'annotation' to describe such commentary were available to Erasmus as he modelled his 'notes.' The comments addressed questions of textual authenticity, textual construction, semantics, grammar, problems of interpretation, and the difficulties in the narratives of Scripture, such as inconsistencies and contradictions.[234] The tradition also provided models of idiom for philological notes,

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232 Cf Valla's comments in his annotation on Matt 4:10 (*et illi soli servies*), Valla *Opera omnia* I 808 1; also 'New Testament Scholarship' 19 with nn102, 104.

233 Cf eg Epp 304:99–101, 337:877–94. For the publication details of Lefèvre's commentary see 'New Testament Scholarship' 99 with n406.

234 Problems of interpretation were germane not only, of course, to the tradition of annotation but also more widely to the tradition of exegesis in general. The Fathers were often forced to address difficulties, such as apparent contradictions

as well as examples of annotation that included observations and reflections going well beyond the strictly philological. In his *Annotations* Erasmus brought to this tradition his own imagination to create a highly individualized 'commentary.' By adopting pervasively the traditional philological idiom, he placed his annotations unmistakably within the sphere of the grammarian, and the persistent discussion of textual authorities reflected the concerns of the humanists. But Erasmus' annotations move beyond purely mundane notes to achieve a level of literary interest arising from several features: they reflect a critical instinct indicative of an engaged and engaging mind, notably suggested, as occasion arises, by the subtle invitation to the reader to see the discussion of the text as a debate among exegetes to which the reader is present as judge; they move repeatedly and often unexpectedly to probe critical points of theological concern and to challenge existing ecclesiastical practices; they pause, however briefly, for storytelling, incorporating Erasmus' superb instinct for drama in the delineation of setting and action and in the portrayal of character; they become, at points, pungent with satire emerging sometimes from a brief remark, pithy, unexpected, apparently spontaneous, sometimes from comments more studied and sustained, satire sometimes genial and Horatian, sometimes savage and Juvenalian.

These characteristics identify as peculiarly Erasmian each of the five editions of the *Annotations*. Changing circumstances, however – the discovery of new manuscripts, the new faces of critics that appeared from time to time to whom Erasmus had an irresistible inclination to respond, the remarkable developments in the world of ecclesiastical affairs in the years between the first edition (1516) and the last (1535) – gave each edition an individualizing character of its own, demanding its own distinct analysis for full appreciation. Each edition was, moreover, built upon the foundation of its predecessor. Consequently, since the *Annotations* of the first edition lies at the base of Erasmus' work, it invites a comparatively full exploration.

The fundamental format in which the annotations were presented consisted simply of a lemma or 'cue phrase' (taken usually from the Vulgate text) followed by the annotator's comment, lemma and comment being separated

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in the narratives of Scripture. For example, in his *Tractates on John*, Augustine raised questions about the narrative of John's knowledge of Jesus and about the contradiction between the Synoptic Gospels and that of John in their somewhat different narratives of Peter's denial (*In Johannis evangelium tractatus* 4.12–16 and 113.5–114.1). Erasmus adopted the practice in his *Annotations*. Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 368 with nn1592, 1593.

by a single parenthesis mark. We have seen above that in *1516* notes on several expressions were grouped together in one paragraph, perhaps in some cases due to Erasmus' assistants who, he claims, assembled the annotations,[235] but certainly encouraged by the haste with which the book was produced. In fact, there are almost everywhere indications of haste, with certain implications for the form in which the *Annotations* of 1516 have come to us. In an early letter to Guillaume Budé Erasmus gives us a vivid picture of the near chaos in Froben's workshop during the printing of the *Annotations*. Not only was the Jerome commentary being printed at the same time as the New Testament, but even while the New Testament was being printed, Erasmus was correcting text for the compositors, correcting proofs, and adding to the annotations.[236] The New Testament text was printed before the *Annotations*, and on several occasions Erasmus expresses embarrassment for an error whose presence in the text he could not explain.[237] In the prefatory letter to the *Annotations* Erasmus acknowledged that more work was needed on the Epistles than on the Gospels,[238] and this is reflected in the space appropriated by each in the *Annotations*: in the Gospels and Acts, Erasmus wrote 179 pages of annotations for 322 pages of text; in the Pauline Epistles (Romans–Philemon), there are 172 pages of notes for approximately 132 pages of text. Strikingly, productivity falls off sharply for Hebrews and the Catholic Epistles: here we have only 36 pages of annotations for 52.5 pages of text. The comparatively slender annotation on the Catholic Epistles was no doubt due in part to the apparent unavailability of commentaries on them previous to *1516*, but one may well suppose that Erasmus was also running out of time. Even the printing in these last annotations seems frequently chaotic, suggesting haste. The irrational omission of some chapter numbers in the

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235 For the grouping of the notes see 'New Testament Scholarship' 38. For reference to the work of assistants in assembling the annotations see the *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 23 and the annotation on Luke 9:51 (*facies eius erat euntis*), an annotation that appeared in *1516* among the annotations on Luke 5, to which Erasmus added in *1516* a hasty explanation that it had been misplaced by his assistants, a remark omitted in all later editions; cf ASD VI-5 512:752–3n.

236 Cf Ep 421:50–76. The letter of Oecolampadius printed at the end of the *1516* annotations gives the reader a rhetorically vivid picture of Erasmus at work: 'a miraculous spectacle or rather a spectacular miracle'; cf 'Prefaces and Letters' 775.

237 Cf annotation on Matt 9:1 (*et ascendens Iesus*): 'At this point [9:1] the word "Jesus" is not repeated in the Greek or Latin manuscripts. I have no idea how it came to be added in this first edition' (from *1519* 'in the first edition').

238 Cf Ep 373:207–13; 'Prefaces and Letters' 790 with n43.

annotations from 1 Peter to Revelation is particularly obvious. In fact, gross printing errors become prevalent already in the Pauline Epistles: names are misspelled, lower case replaces capitals – as, for example, when *paulo* 'by a little' is printed for *Paulo* 'to Paul'[239] – and punctuation is skewed.[240] The skip in pagination from 618 to 669 between the annotations on 2 John and 3 John likewise suggests haste or at least carelessness. Two pages of corrigenda had to be added in fine print at the end of the book to acknowledge mistakes caught even before it was published!

In all editions after *1516*, additions and changes to the text of the annotations were (apart from an occasional omission) either simply inserted into or welded together with the text established in the preceding edition. The edition of 1516 is unique, therefore, in so far as the form of the annotations enjoys an integrity visible to the reader and not available in later editions. Hence it is particularly easy to discern the large extent to which the annotations in the first edition are devoted to the defence of the translation. Characteristically, in this edition the annotations are short. As a rule, the Latin cue phrase from the Vulgate is followed immediately by the Greek expression that the Latin is supposed to represent, which in turn is followed by Erasmus' translation or a paraphrase expressing the same thought in a different form. When the annotation is set up in this way, the superiority of Erasmus' translation can appear immediately and vividly before the eyes. The annotation might continue by noting a variant, especially if punctuation is in question or if the variant casts light on the sense of the passage. If the

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239 Cf eg the annotation on 2 Cor 8:5 (*et non sicut speravimus*): '… so that no one should suppose that this happened beyond hope *paulo* "by a little" ['to Paul' intended].'

240 Cf the annotation on 2 Cor 8:14 (*vestra abundantia*): *hic suppleat, additum est cum Graece sic habeatur*, which would translate as, '… here let supply; it has been added since the Greek is …' Erasmus clearly intended *hic* '*suppleat*' *additum est* 'Here the verb "let supply" has been added since the Greek is …' Or again cf the annotation on 2 Cor 11:6 (*nam et si*), which with the *1516* punctuation reads: 'This translator frequently translates for δέ. For. Moreover, however unskilled. For he opposes …' Properly punctuated, the annotation should read, 'This translator frequently translates δέ as "for." Further, "however unskilled" is contrasted with his previous statement …' Later editions would, of course, correct such mistakes. Indeed, Froben, in a letter printed in the 1519 edition, acknowledged the faults in the printing of the first edition and pointed to the compensatory care he had taken to make amends in the second edition; cf 'Prefaces and Letters' 777–8 with n3.

Latin expression cannot fully embrace the intent of the Greek, a short semantic study of the full meaning of the Greek text may help to justify Erasmus' translation.

Such is the skeletal, one might say, normative form of the annotations of the first edition, a form in its spareness most easily visible perhaps in the annotations on Mark, Acts, and some of the later Epistles. The form does, however, readily permit the discussion to expand so that an annotation can become more than merely a strategy of defence and can find room to offer a genuine appreciation of the literary qualities and theological implications of the passage under discussion. Indeed, some annotations in *1516* anticipate the laboured, elaborate, and well-organized arguments more frequently found in later editions. Thus, almost at the very beginning of the *Annotations*, the annotation on Matthew 1:19 (*nollet eam traducere*) reflects the fully developed Erasmian annotation as a well-defined argument brought to the service of the philological restoration of Scripture. It begins with satire directed at the Translator – 'for once the Translator found an elegant expression!' – then turns the satire towards the medieval exegetes who stumbled over even an elegant word: Nicholas of Lyra, Thomas Aquinas, and above all Peter Lombard, whose attempt to eliminate questions from theology resulted only in an ocean of questions being poured forth. An examination of classical usage of the word *traducere* follows, citing Martial, Petronius, Seneca, Livy; then the Fathers are reviewed for their understanding of the Greek, and finally the Greek word is explored as it is found in the New Testament.

Two further formal elements in the annotations of *1516* should be briefly noted. First, quite remarkable is the heavy and extensive annotation on the first verses of Romans, annotated at length with a richness in stylistic and theological observation that suggests the influence of Erasmus' work on his projected commentary on the Epistle, a commentary begun but never completed.[241] Second, in the first edition Hebrew is cited much more extensively than in subsequent editions, generally with 'Jerome's translation' added, sometimes also with the identical passage from the Septuagint translated into Latin. Erasmus' stated interest in examining the Old Testament quotations in the New would continue in later editions, but with much less Hebrew printed in the text.

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241 Cf the very first annotation on Rom 1:1 ('Paul'), where Erasmus refers to the 'commentary on Paul' that he 'began some time ago and will soon finish' CWE 56 3; cf ibidem n10; also 'New Testament Scholarship' n141. The words just cited were omitted in the last two editions.

We may now turn from formal considerations to those essential characteristics apparent in the first edition that would prevail in all subsequent editions.

*Essential Characteristics*

**1/ THE HISTORICAL-CRITICAL APPROACH**

Underlying Erasmus' philological work in the *Annotations* lay an inclination, no doubt humanist in inspiration, to apply historical-critical assumptions to the text of the New Testament. For the author of the *Annotations*, the New Testament was not a collection of propositions for a timeless theology or a source of obscure mysteries to satisfy the ingenuity of the illuminated. It was rather a collection of books rooted in a historical context and written by human authors. In this respect, even the title of a book might have significance. Matthew, Erasmus notes, designates his book as a 'Gospel,' a new word for a new kind of history. The title follows the prophetic manner; it is an incomplete sentence pointing to the contents – 'The book of the generation of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham' – and looks directly to its primitive setting, where its intended audience was Jewish, an audience that would be pleased with a genealogy beginning with Abraham.[242] Erasmus also comments on the title of Acts, expressing his preference for a title such as *gesta* 'deeds,' echoing the phrase *res gestae*, which was common in classical literature to designate the exploits of the great heroes of Greece and Rome celebrated in pagan history. Moreover, Erasmus particularly emphasizes the deliberately historical character of Luke-Acts. He notes that Luke begins his Gospel by pointing to the circumstances of its composition: Erasmus sees in Luke's first four verses a clear allusion to the fact that Luke was writing a gospel history at a time when the Gospels of Matthew and Mark had become available, at time also when apocryphal Gospels had sprung up, when those who participated in the events to be recorded had disappeared and oral tradition had to give way to the narrative of a historian who had tracked down the facts and completed the story left incomplete by the first two Gospels. In the first annotations on Acts he notes that Luke-Acts should be considered two volumes of a single 'evangelical history,' expresses the wish that the history had been extended, then alludes to the purpose and value of history while marking sharply the distance between past and present: Acts is a book to which Christians owe intense study, so that they 'might come to know the

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242 Cf the first three annotations on Matt 1:1.

origin of their race, and knowing this, might know how a religion that had fallen in ruins might be restored.'

To question authorship and authenticity of ancient texts presupposes the historical perspective. In the second annotation on Acts Erasmus assumes authorization by the church as the standard of authenticity, an authorization Acts has always enjoyed, whereas Hebrews and James acquired it with hesitation, Revelation 'even to this day' only in part. Erasmus acknowledged that the authorship of Matthew was problematic. At almost the beginning of the *Annotations* he notes Jerome's view that the book was written by Matthew as a Hebrew speaker writing in Hebrew to Jews; and some think that it was translated into Greek by the apostle John. He himself, however, is doubtful of this construction, and his doubt is based on historical-critical grounds: Jerome never indicated that he had seen a copy of the Gospel in Hebrew, nor indeed has anyone else ever said that he had seen such a book. If Jerome had seen a copy, we must conjecture that he certainly would have appealed to it in his revision of the Gospels. In fact, the prose style in Matthew corresponds so closely to that of Mark, Luke, and John that we must suppose that Matthew too, like the others, was written in Greek.[243] While Erasmus did not question the authorship of the thirteen Epistles traditionally ascribed to Paul, he expressed doubts about all the other Epistles, except 1 John and 1 Peter. The arguments he brought against the Johannine authorship of Revelation were so powerful that a decade later his Louvain critic Frans Titelmans complained they could undermine the faith![244]

The historical-critical approach to the books of the New Testament as documents written by men – saintly, no doubt, but fallible – reflecting their cultural context, writing in the idiom and rhetoric of the language they were accustomed to speak, and each in his own idiosyncratic style was fundamental to Erasmus' endeavour in the *1516 Annotations*. This view did, of course, underlie the entire New Testament project in the insistence that the original language in which the documents were written – Greek – was the primary and essential base on which any authentic reading of the text must proceed. For Erasmus, the language in which the New Testament was written was not a flawless celestial gift, but the product of historical influences. Luke, Greek speaker though he was, nevertheless admitted Hebrew idioms into his

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243 For the argument see the annotations on Matt 1:1 (*filii David, filii Abraam*), (*genuit Isaac*) and on Matt 8:23 (*et ascendente eo*).

244 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 335 with n1441.

written narratives.[245] Paul's Greek, often unpolished, was deeply affected by the Cilician culture of Tarsus in which he was born[246] and occasionally imitated the manner of the Hebrew in which he was educated.[247] Perhaps no comment reflects Erasmus' historical perspective on the language of Scripture more fully than the annotation on Acts 10:38 (*quomodo unxit eum*): 'It is uncertain whether [in his address in Cornelius' house] Peter spoke Hebrew or Greek. Yet even when the apostles wrote Greek, they often reflect their native [Aramaic] tongue – just as today relatively uneducated people who speak Latin sprinkle it with some of their own vernacular speech, whether French, English, or German. For the apostles did not learn their Greek from Demosthenes, but from contextual everyday conversation.' The historical-critical implications of these words could not be missed, and few annotations in the 1516 edition would receive more severe criticism.

Implicit in this historical view of biblical literature was the acknowledgment, on the one hand, of the fallibility of the writers and, on the other, of the specificity of the writing, particularly of the apostolic Epistles, set in a time and place, and directed to a well-defined audience with whom the apostles had undertaken to establish an appropriate relationship.[248] The acknowledgment of the fallibility of the writers proved to be explosive: that the apostles could have had a memory lapse while quoting Scripture was unthinkable to many.[249] At the same time, Erasmus does moderate the degree to which objective historical judgments may be made in relation to biblical literature. While making the case in the annotation on Romans 1:4 ('from the resurrection of the dead of Jesus Christ') that the 'resurrection of the dead' cannot refer to those saints of whom Matthew speaks in Matthew 27:52, he notes the slender evidence for the event: Matthew alone of the evangelists speaks of it and 'even he touches upon it as it were in passing, with few words and unexplained.' But Erasmus at once qualifies: 'I would not be understood to imply that the reliability of Matthew, who tells the story, is less certain than if [the evangelists] all had reported the same thing – for we do not put the

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245 Cf the annotation on Luke 1:1 (*quoniamquidem*), also on Matt 13:14 (*auditu audietis*).

246 Cf the annotation on 2 Cor 11:6 (*sed non scientia*) and Eph 3:2 (*data est mihi in vobis*).

247 Erasmus points, for example, to the prevalence of duplicate phrases in Paul's prose; cf the annotation on 2 Cor 4:17 (*quod in praesenti est momentaneum et leve*).

248 Cf eg the annotations on Rom 1:7 ('to all who are in Rome') and Rom 1:12 ('to be comforted together').

249 Cf the annotations on Matt 2:6 (*et tu Bethlehem*) and Mark 1:2 (*in Esaia propheta*).

reliability of the Gospel writers to the same test as that of other historians.'[250] The qualification reflects the historical inclination with which Erasmus read and annotated Scripture.

The historical-critical mentality of the humanist shaped the *Annotations* in other ways. Erasmus shared with other humanists a depreciatory view of the Middle Ages. Speaking of that medieval encyclopedia, the *Catholicon*, and its bungling author, Erasmus added, 'Oh, what a wretched age, when from books of this kind the oracles of literature were sought as if they were holy shrines.'[251] Even Thomas Aquinas, distinguished among medieval commentators, was victim of the unfortunate times in which he lived. Back beyond these 'dark ages' was the golden age of early Christianity. While the Fathers play a significant part in the *1516 Annotations*, they do so largely as witnesses to the text, to the correct construction of sentences, and to the language used in antiquity for hermeneutical discourse. However, the historical situation of two of the Fathers, Jerome and Ambrosiaster, gave them special authority as witnesses. Erasmus identified Ambrosiaster with Ambrose of Milan and assumed, therefore, that Ambrosiaster was bilingual, speaking both Greek and Latin. Erasmus consequently supposed that when Ambrosiaster wrote his commentaries on the Epistles he had available the ancient Greek manuscripts and that the Latin translations provided in the commentaries were his own; accordingly, they were translations by a man naturally sensitive to the nuances of both languages, who was capable of transferring the Greek into a precise Latin equivalent. Jerome too had at hand Greek manuscripts and gave evidence of the Greek reading from time to time in his writings, thus reaching back beyond his own age to witness to the authentic reading.[252] Jerome offered evidence also of a Latin translation that existed before the Vulgate, commonly thought to be his translation: his criticism of some expressions found in the Vulgate text of the Epistles pointed clearly to a translation that was not his own but already in existence. This was a critical point in Erasmus' frequent observation that the Vulgate of the early sixteenth century was the product of a historical evolution.

Again, Erasmus' historical sensitivity emerges in the task of clarifying individual, sometimes problematic, passages of Scripture. In the annotation on Luke 3:16 (*calumniam faciatis*) Erasmus calls back to the historical setting

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250 Cf CWE 56 20. Elsewhere, too, Erasmus is concerned about the historical verity of the biblical record; cf eg the annotation on Luke 2:1 (*ut profiterentur*).

251 Annotation on Acts 20:9 (*de tertio coenaculo*)

252 Cf eg the annotation on Matt 24:36 (*nec angeli coelorum*).

those who would see John's admonition to the soldiers as a defence of war: Christ was speaking not to Christians but to pagans, or at least to ungodly Jews. In the annotation on Acts 17:32 (*in quibus et Dionysius*) Erasmus lists in detail the evidence against the common identification of Dionysius with the sixth-century Platonizing philosopher. The annotation on Galatians 3:1 (*O insensati*) describes the historical origin of the Galatians to explain Paul's characterization of them as 'foolish,' or in Erasmus' terms *rudes parumque cordatus* 'uncultivated and not at all sagacious.' For Erasmus the annotation was a well-intended clarification of the Galatians as 'Gallic' in temperament by appeal to their historical origin located in 'Gaul'; to his French friend Guillaume Budé it was taken as an insult that seems to have contributed to the eventual loss of their friendship![253]

**2/** CRITIQUE OF THE TRANSLATOR

Erasmus undertook his work on the New Testament to repair the inadequacies of the text of the Vulgate, one of the chief of which was the translation, whose faults he imputed primarily, if not exclusively, to the Translator. Erasmus was certain that the translator responsible for the Vulgate was not Jerome, but some unknown individual. This assumed anonymity of the Translator offered a certain freedom to Erasmus to criticize him, and Erasmus did so, sometimes harshly, without doubt exacerbating thereby the hostility that his New Testament evoked.[254] Ostensibly, Erasmus' criticism of the Translator was philological. Erasmus complained that the Translator's Latin frequently obscured, even missed, the sense of the Greek or failed to express it accurately. Too often he found that the translation lacked the 'grace' of the original Greek – its *venustas* – and its forcefulness. Moreover, the Translator failed at many points to write standard, that is, classical Latin: too often he transliterated Greek words into Latin or imitated Greek idioms, sometimes even Greek grammatical constructions. In addition, the Translator would get the verb tenses wrong, writing a Latin present for a Greek past tense. He seemed sometimes to have misunderstood Greek conjunctions and very

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253 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 323 with n1370, where it is suggested that the breaking point in their friendship was Budé's sense of diminished stature in Erasmus' *Ciceronianus*.

254 The translator of the Vulgate was generally assumed to be Jerome, a view Erasmus constantly countered. He repeatedly insisted that no one knows who the Translator was; cf eg *Contra morosos* paragraph 22. In a *1535* addition to *Contra morosos* Erasmus acknowledged 'some guilt' in his treatment of the Translator; cf paragraphs 27f and 27g.

frequently introduced, incorrectly, the Greek pattern of speech for indirect discourse into the Latin text. And the Translator exhibited an astonishing delight in variety of expression – in *copia* – finding different Latin words for the same Greek word; and this, Erasmus says in evident jest, 'even before I published my *De copia*!'[255]

In fact, the philological criticism was often tinged with sarcasm, irony, and a certain disrespect that many interpreted as irreverence towards a most holy saint. It is noteworthy that Erasmus speaks of the Translator in the sharpest tones most frequently in the annotations on Matthew – the first to appear when the annotations are read consecutively. Such comments are less profuse in the annotations on the subsequent Gospels, and in those on the final books of the New Testament the presence of the Translator is almost (though not wholly) negligible. The sarcasm, the air of superiority, a certain arrogance is unmistakable throughout the annotations on Matthew: 'I ask you, what supine indolence is this in treating sacred literature?'[256] 'What is "go"? Surely Christ is not sending [Satan] somewhere? The Greek … is "depart."'[257] 'These expressions are unheard of in Latin.'[258] 'Whoever said "look upon" for "beware"?'[259] 'It is simply astonishing that the Translator, who usually strives for *copia* to the detriment of the sense, in this place does not change the [incorrect] word.'[260] 'Perhaps he thinks that to write solecisms is quite a fine thing.' [261] 'Whoever heard the expression "they are taken to wife"?'[262] 'One wonders why here the Translator has taken pleasure in speaking incorrectly.'[263]

Statements of this kind gave the Translator a presence, a persona, in the discussion, so that Erasmus' critique of the Vulgate appeared as a personal attack on the anonymous Translator. Moreover, these characterizing personal statements gained force in some cases by the prevalent arrangement of annotations into paragraphs that enabled a rapid review of the Translator's

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255 Cf the annotation on 2 Thess 3:10 (*denunciabamus*); cf also *Contra morosos* paragraph 27f.
256 Annotation on Matt 3:15 (*sine modo*)
257 Annotation on Matt 4:10 (*vade Satana*)
258 Annotation on Matt 4:25 (*de trans Iordanem*)
259 Annotation on Matt 16:6 (*intuemini et cavete*)
260 Annotation on Matt 18:4 (*sicut parvulus iste*)
261 Annotation on Matt 21:39 (*et eiecerent extra vineam*)
262 Annotation on Matt 22:30 (*neque nubent, neque nubentur*); cf the extended list of 'Solecisms' in 'Errors in the Vulgate' 875–83 and for this one #11, 876.
263 Annotation on Matt 24:50 (*qua non sperat*)

mistakes to appear as an unending litany, as in the brief notes on seven expressions in Matthew 15:11–17, where the notes are crowded into eleven lines in a single paragraph with a single lemma:[264] (1) The Translator has lost the 'grace' of the Greek figure, and (2) a little later he mistranslates the verb 'know' and incorrectly introduces indirect discourse, (3) to say nothing of the fact that he transliterates the Greek *scandalizo* when he should have used the Latin *offendo*; (4) in addition he should have used the Latin *sermo* 'speech' rather than *verbum* for *logos*, (5) while he fails to capture the pleasure of the Greek in 'blind leaders of the blind,' (6) and almost immediately afterwards he fails to adopt the best Latin word for 'tell'; (7) besides, it is not 'you do not understand' but 'do you not yet understand?'

The presence of the Translator as a persona acquires special significance when the Translator not only appears as a person but is also subtly identified with the theologians of the sixteenth century. In the annotation on Acts 26:2 (*aestimo me beatum*) the Translator is placed directly in the company of the bumbling modern theologians when Erasmus criticizes him for ignoring twice in a single sentence the fundamental principles of grammatical agreement in Latin: 'See how well the pronouns agree! But the sweetest mistake of all is the disagreement of the neuter adjective and the feminine nouns – as though theologians have a right to speak that way!'[265]

## 3/ PHILOLOGY AT THE CENTRE

### *(i) Philology, Illuminator of the Text*

Erasmus'annotations in *1516* were designed ostensibly to defend and explain his changes to the translation of the Latin Vulgate. But underlying the need for defence and explanation was Erasmus' desire to bring clarity to the text of the New Testament, a clarity that would emerge from the original Greek in a reliable text and that could be further achieved by the resolution of ambiguities, the exploration of the semantic value of words, the analysis of the style of a biblical author, and the demonstration of the emotional power of his words. These all belonged to the domain of philology. Erasmus' tendency to open his questing mind to the reader as he wrote, implicitly to invite the reader to see the intellectual process by which he resolved problems, could

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264 *1516* 270

265 The translation slightly paraphrases the Latin text. In editions subsequent to *1516* the word 'theologians' was omitted from the statement, which then read, 'as though it is right to speak that way.'

only add to the sense of illumination. It is not surprising that in 1524 Erasmus opened his debate with Luther by contending that the obscurities of Scripture were to be clarified not by inspiration but by philology.

The consideration of the Greek text could be foundational in opening a door into the meaning of Scripture. False readings and incorrect punctuation necessarily obscured the intended sense of a passage. To identify these with the help of codices and the use of conjecture was essential, but to explain the error was to invite a flash of light to shine upon the text. Inevitably Erasmus' frequent explanations of the reason for corruptions in the text illuminated the corrections: a stupid scribe changed a word he misunderstood to one of similar form more easily comprehended; another scribe added to clarify the intent of the text; a diligent scribe removed a phrase that seemed repetitive or added a clause from a parallel passage in another Gospel; a conscientious scribe added a word to safeguard orthodox theology or to reflect ecclesiastical practice. The *coronis* of the Lord's Prayer was manifestly added because ecclesiastical custom always added the doxology after the prayer, and Erasmus did not hesitate to observe that orthodox Christians could add or remove words from the biblical text in defence of their theology, just as the 'heretical' Greeks were supposed to have done.[266] Erasmus could relieve the tedium of notes of this kind by his wit.[267] In the annotation on Acts 1:4 (*et convescens praecepit*) he adds a fine touch to his conjecture about the text: 'Anyone who pays some slight attention will easily conjecture that the Translator wrote *conversans* ['associating with'], not *convescens* ['eating with']. I imagine some starveling, dreaming of nothing but food, changed the word to *convescens* because he thought it churlish of Christ to leave his disciples

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266 For the Lord's Prayer see the annotation on Matt 6:13 (*quia tuum regnum est*). For theological prejudice see the annotation on 1 Tim 1:17 (*soli Deo*) and the annotations on Matt 3:11 (*in spiritu sancto*), where Erasmus points to an 'erasure' in 'some' Greek manuscripts due to 'hatred of certain heretics'; on Matt 24:36 (*nec angeli coelorum*), where an erasure was motivated by the defence of orthodox truth against the Arians; and on 1 Tim 3:16 (*quod manifestum est in carne*), where an addition was directed, it would seem, against Arianism. For Erasmus as textual critic see 'New Testament Scholarship' 41 with n186 above and 46 with n201.

267 Erasmus occasionally expressed in *1516* his fear that his readers would find his annotations tedious; cf the preface to the annotations on Mark, where Erasmus promises less extensive annotation on the text of Mark than on Matthew 'to remedy the irksome weariness of his readers – and of himself – that would otherwise be intolerable'! Cf Ep 373:87–90; 'Prefaces and Letters' 785.

before he had a little drinking bout with them – like the common custom today!' This witty but offensive comment was removed in *1522*!

However, correcting the text was really only the first step in the philologist's task. The language of the text must still be understood – be clarified. For Erasmus this meant, in the first place, the elimination of ambiguities. Within the first two pages of the annotations Erasmus recalled the wisdom of Quintilian, who 'rightly warns that ambiguities must be avoided as far as possible.'[268] Ambiguity arose from many sources: from the polyvalence of some Greek words; from Greek grammar, as in the case of the second plural active of the verb, where the form is identical in both the indicative and the imperative; from the excessively complicated, even twisted arrangement of Greek words – a 'figure' known as hyperbaton – which sometimes may have been due to the haste or incompetence of the writer; from the need to supply punctuation for a text in which the grammatical inflections did not clearly indicate the relationship of ideas: was a phrase to be taken with the clause that preceded or that followed, and when did the author intend an affirmation or an interrogation? Erasmus attempted to clarify sometimes by a literal, sometimes by a free translation within the annotation, frequently by a paraphrase introduced by 'the sense is.' Sometimes he acknowledged, particularly in the New Testament epistolary literature, that a satisfactory solution was unattainable, and he offered two or more possible ways of understanding a passage. Here, too, Erasmus solicited the witness of the Fathers.

Erasmus recognized the semantic complexity of many New Testament words. He clearly delighted in revealing, as far as possible, the full force of Greek compounds, of which there are many in the New Testament. On a single page of annotations on Acts he noted five words somewhat artificially compounded and attempted to indicate how the sense inherent in the parts produced the meaning of the composite word: *θυμομαχῶν* 'intent to make war,' *σκωληκόβρωτος* 'worm-eaten,' *ῥᾳδιουργίας* 'propensity to any kind of mischief,' *χειραγωγούς* 'those who would lead [him] by the hand' or, as Erasmus says, 'hand leaders,' and *ἐτροποφόρησεν* 'endured [their] behaviour.'[269] In the same vein, Erasmus attempted to draw out the meaning and often also the implied imagery of standard words compounded with prepositional prefixes. In the annotation on Romans 8:26 ('likewise also the Spirit helps [our] infirmity') he notes the force of the double prefix (*syn+anti*) in the Greek *synantilambanesthai* and the vivid image implied: the word

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268 Cf the annotation on Matt 1:11 (*in transmigratione Babylonis*).
269 Annotations on Acts 12:20–13:18, in *1516* 388

'means to be present with aid for one who is struggling in something he has undertaken … just as we strive, looking forward with endurance, so also the Spirit gives its aid to the weary, as though stretching out a hand to those who struggle.'[270] Similarly, he was attentive to the precise nuance of words, especially where confusion might arise between words of overlapping meaning, for example, in the case of 'disease' (*νόσος*) and 'infirmity' (*μαλακία*), and he tried to distinguish ways in which some of the words for 'good' and 'bad' appeared in the New Testament.[271]

Probably no word receives more attention in the annotations than the Greek definite article *ho*. In his 'Letter to the Reader' that prefaced the *Annotations* Erasmus emphasized the importance of the definite article, indicating its value for theological discussion.[272] The discussion of the definite article is, in fact, ubiquitous throughout the annotations, most frequently without explicit theological import but rather to show how the article functions to clarify by specifying. The specification may clarify in a variety of ways: it can eliminate ambiguities arising from uninflected Hebrew names;[273] it can serve to identify persons unmistakably;[274] it may add characterization to an identification, as in Matthew 27:40 where the article reflects contempt for the man who would destroy the temple.[275] Thus the article illustrated particularly well the value of observing philological minutiae for all who wished to read the Scriptures with clarity of understanding.[276]

In the *Methodus* of 1516 Erasmus bolstered his case for reading the New Testament in Greek by observing that translations lose the native grace inherent in words in the original language.[277] In the later *Ratio* he repeated the statement and spoke further of the effect of rhetorical figures 'that contribute

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270 CWE 56 221–2

271 Eg for 'bad' (*κακία* and *πονηρία*) see the annotation on Rom 1:29 ('with wickedness'); for 'good' (*καλός* and *ἀγαθός*) see the annotations on Matt 15:26 (*non est bonum*) and Rom 15:14 ('you are full of love'), distinguishing *ἀγαθωσύνη* from *χρηστότης*.

272 Cf Ep 373:138–40; 'Prefaces and Letters' 787 with n30; cf also 70 with n285 below.

273 Cf the annotation on Rom 4:16 ('not to him who is of the Law only'); cf also the annotation on Rev 20:8 (*Gog et Magog*).

274 Cf the annotations on Matt 10:1 (*et convocatis duodecim*), where the article designates specifically the twelve disciples, and on Col 4: 14 (*Lucas medicus*), where the article points specifically to Luke the physician.

275 Cf the annotation on Matt 27:40 (*vah qui destruis*).

276 Cf Ep 373:84–105, 130–49; 'Prefaces and Letters' 785–6, 787–8.

277 Cf *Methodus* 429 with n23, repeated in *Ratio* 498 with n45.

either the weight or the pleasure of discourse to the artistic arrangement.' He added, 'Although the sense of mystic Scripture stands firm without them, through these figures the Scriptures steal into our minds more effectually and more pleasurably.'[278] Hence in the annotations Erasmus frequently attempted to sharpen the recognition of the emotional force inherent in the original language of Scripture. He has a fairly standard vocabulary for this: *gratia* 'charm,' 'grace'; and (with their noun analogues) the adjectives *elegans* 'apt,' 'tasteful,' 'well chosen'; *festivus* 'pleasing'; *iucundus* 'delightful'; *venustus* 'comely,' 'elegant'; and *vehemens* 'forceful.' He notes the *iucunditas* of the Greek compound *οἰνοπότης* 'winebibber,' a pleasure lost in the Vulgate's *vini potator* 'drinker of wine.'[279] He finds 'grace' in patterned expression created by sound or sense or both; in 2 Corinthians 5:6 there is a particular grace where similarity of sound is complemented by a contrast in sense: *ἐνδημοῦντες* 'at home,' 'present' and *ἐκδημοῦμεν* 'away from home,' 'absent.'[280]

Already in the first edition of the *Annotations* the style of Paul engaged Erasmus, an interest that would be carried much further in later editions, especially the edition of 1527. On the one hand, he calls the reader's attention to the many syntactical difficulties in the Pauline Epistles and confirms Jerome's judgment that Paul sometimes seems unskilled in speech.[281] On the other hand, he calls the reader's attention to the many figures of speech and thought in Paul's writings, figures that had been identified in their passages even in antiquity. He distinguishes Paul's speech by its force – 'thunder and lightning, sheer fire.'[282] He frequently observes Paul's fondness for setting in contrast opposite ideas and occasionally offers a brief appreciation of the style of an extended passage. Of 2 Corinthians 6:4–11 he writes: 'Through the contrasting opposites, the series of short clauses, the words with similar endings [in the Greek], the duplication of thought and other figures of this kind, this entire passage is replete with variation and moves forward with the thought circling and revolving in such a way that nothing could be lovelier or more passionate.'[283] Similarly, in the annotation on 2 Corinthians 11:23 (*ministri Christi sunt*) he notes how beautifully the passage has become patterned through the 'ornaments and figures of speech.' To see in the Apostle

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278 Cf *Ratio* 656 with n880.
279 Cf the annotation on Matt 11:19 (*vini potator*).
280 Cf the annotation on the verse (*dum sumus in hoc corp.*).
281 Cf the annotation on 2 Cor 11:6 (*sed non scientia*).
282 Cf the annotation on Col 4:16 (*et cum lecta fuerit*).
283 Cf the annotation on 2 Cor 6:8 (*ut seductores*). For the considerable stylistic analysis in the fourth edition see 'New Testament Scholarship' 301–4.

an exemplar of the classical principle that the purpose of artistic speech is to teach, to delight, to move is to bring illumination to the biblical text.

*(ii) Philology, Handmaid of Theology*

In his *Apologia* Erasmus claimed that he had undertaken the revision of the New Testament for the benefit of theologians.[284] His annotations were, he admitted, philological work tedious for both annotator and readers, but work that had momentous implications for theology. In composing the *1516 Annotations*, Erasmus seems to have kept clearly in view his conviction that good philology is the foundation for good theology, a conviction nicely attested in the analysis of a few key expressions (cited here) that was intended to illuminate the text, but, as it happened, was found to threaten traditional theology:

**John 1:1** (the definite article). In his 'Letter to the Reader' preceding the *Annotations* of *1516* Erasmus recalled Cyril who had found 'a great mystic meaning in the Greek definite article, in the one poor letter *ὁ*.'[285] Although, as we have seen, Erasmus frequently calls attention to the definite article without necessarily any specific theological intent, his analysis of the article in three annotations on John 1:1 was particularly significant for theology.[286] He argued that in Greek, when a noun appeared without an article, contingency or limitation is implied, for example, a beautiful object; when, on the other hand, a noun was preceded by the definite article, it referred to what was absolute and universal, for example, 'the beautiful,' 'the good.' Thus in the first two clauses of John 1:1 the definite article defines God as absolute and the Word, that is, the Son, as that one, true, and only Son eternally with the Father, a grammatical construction that rules out any heretical conception of another derivative Word. In the third clause there is no article to modify 'God,' reflecting here, however, the need to avoid 'confusion of the Persons,' for with the article one would be forced to read 'God was the Word,' that is, God in essential being was the Word, that is, the Father was the Son, thus confusing Father and Son. Here Erasmus points to what he regarded as the characteristic manner of speech of the evangelists and apostles: the word 'God' was generally attributed to the Father, perhaps never to the Son. Although this remark was eliminated from the annotation in *1522*

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284 Cf *Apologia* 458.

285 Cf Ep 373:138–40; cf n272 above.

286 Cf the annotations on the verse (*in principio erat verbum*, *erat verbum*, and *et verbum erat apud Deum*).

and later editions, it remained a firm conviction of Erasmus, expressed elsewhere.[287] Erasmus concluded the last of these annotations with a somewhat acidic reminder of the purpose of his philological work: 'I thought I should point this out so that our theologians might better understand that it makes some difference whether you interpret Scripture from the original or from translations.'[288] Critics were not slow to respond. They found Erasmus' philology itself open to question, and if on the one hand Erasmus' philology had supported traditional Trinitarianism, on the other it appeared to offer a handle to Arianism.[289]

**Acts 4:27.** The Greek *παῖς* is ambiguous, designating either child or servant. The Vulgate had translated *puer*, equally ambiguous. In his annotation on the verse Erasmus points out Latin usage of *puer*: 'son' infrequently, 'servant' more frequently, 'young child' most frequently.[290] Which, then, does the context invite us to choose in this passage? Christ was not a young child when he brought salvation, and while his obedience might suggest 'servant,' yet his obedience was not to a master but to his Father – the obedience therefore of a Son. Hence the Latin *filius* 'son' is the correct translation. This philological analysis was not without theological consequences. Erasmus complained in the third edition that he had been impugned with the charge of both Apollinarianism and Arianism.[291]

**Philippians 2:6–7.** Erasmus recognized that the key words in this passage – a favourite passage for university disputations, he noted[292] – are *μορφή* and *ὁμοίωμα*. He dismisses Aristotelian definitions as irrelevant here and argues that both words are intended to point not to nature but to appearance. His intent, somewhat covert in *1516*, is clarified in *1519* by allusion to Ambrosiaster: as a man, the mighty deeds of Christ appeared divine; but Christ did not claim that divinity (his equality with God), as he might rightly

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287 Cf eg the annotation on Rom 1:4 ('of Jesus Christ our Lord'). Cf also 'New Testament Scholarship' 308–9 with nn1288, 1290.

288 Literally, 'whether you draw the "mystic literature" from its own sources or from derivative sources'

289 Cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* (Notes 70–1) CWE 72 172–9

290 Cf the annotation on Acts 4:27 (*adversus puerum tuum Iesum*). In his translation Erasmus retained the Vulgate's *puer* in *1516* but changed to *filius* in *1519*.

291 Cf the *1522* addition to the annotation and the *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae* ASD IX-2 140:600–146:714.

292 Cf the annotation on Phil 2:6 (*esse se aequalem Deo*) ASD VI-9 288:222–4.

have claimed, but instead assumed the appearance of a slave in the suffering and punishment of the cross. Lee challenged the Christology implied.[293]

**Hebrews 2:7** *minuisti eum paulominus ab angelis*[294] 'You have made him a little lower than the angels.' Christian tradition has taken this citation from Psalm 8 as a Christological reference in Hebrews. Although Erasmus contended for the reading of the Septuagint, 'lower than the angels,' he acknowledged that both Jerome in antiquity and his own contemporary Lefèvre thought 'God' rather than 'angels' was the correct interpretation of the Hebrew. But either way, Erasmus noted, the problem is the same: how can Christ be said to be made only a '*little* lower' than either, when he was subjected to the punishment of a criminal and slave? Philology offered an escape: the phrase *βραχύ τι* can be understood in terms of space (a little lower) or time (for a little while). By choosing the latter, Erasmus saw a theologically acceptable reference, not to Christ's assumption of the human nature but to his relatively brief suffering and crucifixion when he assumed the appearance of a slave. The annotation, as we shall observe, occasioned the bitter controversy with Lefèvre.[295]

**Luke 1:28–9.** If philology could open to question traditional Christology, it proved to be even shocking when it was applied to the narrative of Mary in Luke 1. The examination of both text and semantics in these verses suggested a radical new interpretation of the annunciation.[296] Especially important was the word *κεχαριτωμένη*, which, Erasmus argued, was said of one who was loved and in whom one found pleasure, and the view was confirmed by Mary's startled reaction when she unexpectedly saw a young man advancing with apparently amorous words. The image thus evoked seemed sacrilegious to some; certainly it tended to reduce Mary to very human proportions.[297] The human Mary could be seen again in the annotation on Luke 1:48 (*humilitatem ancillae*), where Mary's 'humility' was interpreted as her poverty and lowly station in life, rather than any saintly virtue of humility

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293 Cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 2* (Note 189) and *3* (Note 20) CWE 72 303 and 393–5.

294 This is the cue phrase for the annotation.

295 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 99 with nn405, 406.

296 Cf the annotations on Luke 1:28 (*ave gratia plena*), (*benedicta tu.*), and 1:29 (*quae cum audisset*). Modern biblical scholarship eliminates from the text the clauses to which the last two cue phrases refer: 'Blessed are you among women,' and 'which when she had heard.' Erasmus' text included both clauses, but in the last clause he read *vidisset* 'she had seen' rather than *audisset* 'she had heard.'

297 Cf Erasmus' response to the accusations of Lee, *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* (Note 32) CWE 72 131–7.

she might have possessed, an implication explicated in the paraphrase on the verse and later condemned by Béda and the Paris theologians.[298]

**Romans 5:12 and 14.** Erasmus observed in both these verses ambiguity in the Greek. The *ἐφ' ᾧ* of 5:12 had been interpreted to refer to the one man, Adam, or his sin – in whom, or in which (*ἐφ' ᾧ*) all had sinned, supporting the doctrine of original sin. But a philological examination of the phrase in the Pauline writings suggested other possible meanings: 'in this that' or 'to whatever extent' or 'inasmuch as,' interpretations that could be construed as Pelagian, making each person responsible for the death that comes as a result of his own sin. Similarly in 5:14, the expression *τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος* conceals an ambiguity. The Greek genitive case *τοῦ μέλλοντος* could be either masculine or neuter, hence one might read either 'the form of the one to come' (Christ) or 'the form of what was to come,' that is, the sin each person was to commit in imitation of Adam – an interpretation that seems to disregard original sin. Erasmus was clearly aware of the dangers; he concluded the annotation on 5:14 with an appeal to the innocence of philology: 'I have shown what sense can be gathered from the Greek words; the wise and prudent reader will follow what he judges to be best.'[299] Critics, nevertheless, discovered serious threats to traditional theology![300]

The annotations cited here should illustrate clearly enough how, while defending his translation, Erasmus also, by his philological explorations, at crucial points brought the Greek language to bear on some of the most fundamental beliefs of the church. He had reason to hope that theologians would be grateful for such ancillary work on the biblical text. In fact, many theologians were incapable of accepting the challenge thus offered to traditional theology, and philology, the handmaid Erasmus provided for them, was too often too lightly esteemed.

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298 Cf *Supputatio* ASD IX-5 386:970–392:124 and *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* CWE 82 233–4. See 'New Testament Scholarship' 306–7 with nn1280, 1282 for Erasmus' response to Béda in *1527*.

299 For the annotation on Rom 5:12 ('in whom [or, in which] all have sinned') see CWE 56 151–2 (the *1516* text is given in n2); for the annotation on Rom 5:14 ('the figure of the one to come') see CWE 56 167–8.

300 Cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 2* (Notes 141, 142) CWE 72 269–71, *Responsio ad Collationes* CWE 73 186–200; and for the reflection of the annotation in the *Paraphrase on Romans* see *Divinationes ad notata Bedae* ASD IX-5 90:854–92:870 and *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* CWE 82 208–10.

### 4/ CRITICISM OF CHURCH AND SOCIETY

The critic of church and society so evident in the *Moria* is easily discernible in the *Annotations* of *1516*, though without the guise of jesting evident in the former. Erasmus' criticisms in the *Annotations* generally appear to be deadly earnest, unmistakably intended, acerbic, reform oriented. Moreover, Erasmus exploited the annotation as a form to give his criticisms greater force: the annotation as a form invited the occasional, even tangential, comment, which might appear without warning – hence with surprise – like the unexpected stroke of an axe. The impact of the remarks was increased by an implied assumption that primitive Christianity was authoritative: frequently Erasmus called attention to the historical distance between past and present by such expressions as 'but today,' 'but now,' 'but in these times.' Princes, bishops, priests, monks, theologians – all are subjected to the rhetoric of Erasmus.

Erasmus offers a sharp contrast between the ideal prince and the generality of his own day. A prince should be a man free from all the passions that possess the common person, a man whose authority is matched by his wisdom and integrity. It is foolish, however, to imagine that such a prince can be found; in fact, princes pursue universal *imperium* at the cost of bloodshed and are always on the watch for any opportunity to make war.[301] Like secular princes, bishops and their clergy are eager for war and not only arouse others to fight but go to war themselves.[302] One of the most striking portraits in the *1516 Annotations* is that of Julius II, the 'warrior pope,' whom Erasmus witnessed as Julius entered Bologna in a triumph glorious beyond all comparison with those of Pompey or Caesar.[303] Erasmus criticizes also the regal style of the popes,[304] while he marks the tyranny and harshness of the clergy in general manifested in the collection of tithes, in the imposition of

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301 Cf the annotations on Titus 1:8 (*continentem*), Luke 2:3 (*ut profiterentur*), and John 20:21 (*dixit ergo eis iterum, pax vobis*). Cf also the scathing denunciation of war in the annotation on Luke 22:36 (*sed nunc qui habet sacculum*).

302 Cf the annotations on John 20:21 (preceding note) and on the variant of Matt 10:12 (*dicentes pax huic domui*).

303 Cf the annotation on Acts 5:14 ([cited under 5:15 in ASD VI-6 222] *magis autem augebatur credentium in Domino*). Indeed, Erasmus says in the annotation that he witnessed Julius' triumphs both in Bologna and in Rome, a point he confirms in the *Apologia adversus Stunicae Blasphemiae* ASD IX-8 130:246–7. Cf *Julius exclusus* CWE 27 193 with n182.

304 Cf the annotation on Acts 9:43 (*apud Simonem coriarium*) and on the subscription added to Romans (*missa fuit e Corintho*). The remark criticizing the papal luxury in the former annotation was removed after *1522*.

ceremonies, and at the confessional.[305] There is, perhaps less explicit criticism of monks than one might expect from the author of the *Enchiridion*, but there is an overt allusion to nuns in the annotation on 1 Timothy 2:10 (*promittentes*), conveying an implicit criticism of those who declare their piety by their dress. Again, in the annotation on 1 Corinthians 3:8 (*unum sunt*) Erasmus deplores the factions among 'those who are called religious, marked as they are by names, dress, ceremonies, and rules.' Of ecclesiastical types the most widely criticized are the theologians. It is above all their methodology that Erasmus especially condemns – their commitment to syllogisms and ratiocination, so irrelevant to the simple faith and piety essential to true Christianity.[306] Finally, we should note the annotation on Philemon 20 (*ita frater*), where Erasmus has harsh words for an unidentified group that may point to his much later conflict with the Ciceronians: 'Certain people, Christian in name only, in spirit most hostile to Christ, think nothing erudite, nothing elegant that is also not pagan. They suppose their prose has lost all its elegance if there is mingled in it anything about Christ that has the taste of his teaching, although the first principle of elegance is to fit the expression to the subject.'

## 5/ IN PRAISE OF HUMANISM

The *Novum instrumentum* of *1516* was in its design and methodology symbolic of humanist values. The humanist idiom was heavily underlined by the explicit praise given to the great humanists of the Renaissance. Such praise was not disinterested, to be sure; it could make friends and influence people. But the brief, sharply etched images of humanists, the formulaic portraits, the roll-call of humanist heroes added an epic quality to the work as a humanist undertaking. Lefévre, though he missed the mark in his work, nevertheless possessed the ideal humanist qualities of cordiality, affability, and saintliness, along with an 'ardent zeal to restore good literature.'[307] In the annotation on 2 Corinthians 6:15 (*Christi ad Belial*) Reuchlin shares praise with

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305 Cf the annotations on 2 Cor 6:1 (*sed adiuventes etiam exhortamur* [corrected in *1535* to the common Vulgate reading *adiuventes autem exhortamur*]), Acts 20:35 (*oportet suscipere infirmos*), 1 Tim 5:18 (*non alligabis os*), Rom 15:26 ('a collection' [in *1516* only, the comment was included in the preceding annotation]).

306 Cf eg the annotation on Luke 6:20 (*beati pauperes*), where Erasmus names the 'Scotists and Ockhamists,' which had an unpleasant sequel in the quarrel with Edward Lee; cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1*( Note 48) CWE 72 157–8. Cf also the annotations on Acts 20:9 (*disputante Paulo*), Rom 1:5 ('to the obeying of the faith'), and Heb 6:11 (*ad expletionem spei*).

307 Annotation on Rom 1:5 ('for his name')

Rodolphus Agricola – Reuchlin as an outstanding man of universal learning, Agricola as 'the glory and ornament of Germany.' The annotations on Luke 1:4 (*eruditus es, veritatem*) and on 1 Thessalonians 2:7 (*sed facti sumus parvuli*) each offers a long and sustained eulogy of humanists. In the former, contemporary humanists, Budé, Pirckheimer, Beatus Rhenanus – who 'flits about like a bee among the flowers of polished writers' – are associated with the great humanists of Italy's recent past, Ermolao Barbaro and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. In the latter annotation, the humanists are cited to shed lustre upon their nations: Erasmus speaks of his English benefactors and of the great humanists of Italy, France, Germany, and Swizterland. The Medici were born for the advancement of liberal studies; Guillaume Cop has transformed the practice of medicine; Philip Melanchthon has equal mastery of both Greek and Latin, an imaginative and inventive mind, disciplined eloquence, and withal a pleasant and affable nature; Ulrich von Hutten is 'the darling of the Muses.' In both annotations the praise of humanists leads to the praise of good literature: 'Some people find fame in power, war, ancestry, but no king has ever enjoyed the immortal fame of Homer'; indeed, 'there is no glory like the fame derived from "letters."'[308] William Warham as patron of humanists so ennobled England that it was now to be regarded as inferior to none in the skills admired by humanists.[309]

The *Annotations* of *1516* set the basic pattern for all future editions. Subsequent editions would reflect Erasmus' response to criticism, his own re-reading of the biblical text with additional manuscript sources, an ever-deepening knowledge of the Fathers, and occasional reaction to contemporary events. While each edition that followed consequently had its special features and its own individual character, the 1516 edition remained the foundation for all of Erasmus' later annotation of the New Testament text.

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308 Cf respectively the annotations on Luke 1:4 and 1 Thess 2:7; for the citations (in paraphrase here) see ASD VI-5 450–1:6–9, 452:60–76 (critical apparatus) and ASD VI-9 406:263–408:266. For the omission in *1535* of Hutten from the list of humanists see 371 with n1602.

309 Cf the annotation on 1 Thess 2:7 ASD VI-9 400:178–401:184; and for Warham as a Maecenas see the 'Letter to Leo the Tenth,' Ep 384:79–100 and in 'Prefaces and Letters' 770–1 with n16. For the omission in *1535* of the eulogy in the annotation on Luke 1:4 see 'New Testament Scholarship' 371 with n1601; for the omission of a large part of the eulogy in the annotation on 1 Thess 2:7 see ibidem 371 with n1602. Erasmus elsewhere also expressed his abiding appreciation of Warham; cf *Adagia* IV V 1 (1526) CWE 36 132 and Allen Ep 2726:34–57 (1533) available in CWE 36 318–19.

## 6/ APPEAL TO THE EXEGETES: ANCIENT, MEDIEVAL, AND RENAISSANCE

*(i) Ancient*

Erasmus' appeal to the Fathers served essentially three functions. Perhaps most important, he appealed to them as witnesses to the text of the New Testament. From a historical point of view, their proximity to the time in which the New Testament documents were composed authenticated to some degree the citations they made from the Scriptures. The Greek authors were especially helpful, since their citations reflected the language of the New Testament, but a Latin translation of the Greek commentaries, such as those of Chrysostom, was not without value, if used circumspectly. Granted that sometimes their citations had been accommodated to the Vulgate readings, still the attentive scholar could discern from the exposition of the ancient commentator the true reading. Second, the Fathers served as witnesses to the sense of Scripture – to the proper construction of the text, to the semantic value of Greek words, and, where commentators were bilingual, the best Latin equivalent for the Greek words. Latin and Greek were, after all, native languages for the Fathers, and Latin speakers were in a position to learn Greek from its native speakers. Third, though less important, the writings of the Fathers could be mined as sources of information about and for the identification of persons, places, and objects, sources available to be used somewhat in the manner of an encyclopedia.

In the first edition of the *Annotations* the range of patristic literature that Erasmus was able to use effectively was comparatively limited. In fact, Erasmus relied for the most part on commentaries available to him as he worked. Only in the case of Jerome was he able to draw from an extended corpus beyond the commentaries, apparently to some extent from memory. Citations from Augustine, apart from the commentaries on the Gospel of John and the Epistle to the Galatians, were extremely limited; this may not have been due entirely to ignorance, though critics of his first edition did complain that he needed to become better acquainted with Augustine.[310] In any case, it is clear that as he composed his annotations for the first edition Erasmus

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310 Cf eg the letters from Georgius Spalatinus, Ep 501:55–60; and Johann Maier of Eck, Ep 769:107–9: '… there is no shortcoming in you which your supporters so much regret as your failure to have read Augustine.' But as we saw above, Erasmus at this time did know a few of Augustine's works very well, for example, the *De doctrina christiana* to which, perhaps surprisingly, he seldom refers in the annotations of *1516* – perhaps a half dozen times. Certainly, he appears to have been far from a mastery of the wider Augustine corpus.

consulted the Fathers primarily from commentaries they had written on one or more of the New Testament books. Thus in the annotations on Matthew he followed the commentaries written on Matthew by Jerome, Hilary, Chrysostom (partly in Greek, otherwise in translation), and Origen (only the latter part of the Gospel, and in translation); for the annotations on Luke, primarily Ambrose; for those on John Augustine, Cyril (in Greek) and Chrysostom (in translation); for Romans he had Origen (in translation); for Galatians he had the commentaries of both Augustine and Jerome; for Ephesians, Titus, and Philemon, those of Jerome; and for the pastoral Epistles he drew on the homilies of Chrysostom (in translation). For all the Pauline Epistles he relied heavily on the commentaries of Ambrosiaster and referenced frequently the commentaries of the 'Greek scholiast.'[311] Where, as in Mark and Acts, no patristic commentaries were, apparently, available to him, he referred frequently to Valla. Erasmus' citations of the Fathers in *1516* were primarily referential; while there are several lengthy quotations, it was only in later editions that references were frequently completed by substantial quotations, with a significant effect, as we shall see, on the character of the *Annotations*.

Just as the Translator became a felt presence in the *Annotations*, the Fathers too, in various degrees, acquire personae. Erasmus' inclination to historicize tended to remove the halo that surrounded the venerated saints of the past and to transform the saint into a historical person emerging into the discussion at hand. Origen, his heretical views acknowledged, is counted as 'without controversy the first of theologians,' outstanding in his diligent search of Scripture.[312] Erasmus draws a lively, if little commendatory, portrait

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311 Erasmus indicates that manuscripts of Chrysostom's homilies in Greek for 1 Corinthians and for part of Matthew were made available to him in Basel; cf the annotations on Matthew 6:22 (*lucerna corporis tui*) and 15:39 (*in fines Magedan*), and on 1 Cor 15:51 (*omnes quidem resurgemus*) ASD VI-8 304:652–7. For Ambrosiaster see 'New Testament Scholarship' 62. For the the commentary from which the Greek scholia are cited see the annotation on Rom 1:4 ('who was predestined') CWE 56 13 n1 and ASD VI-8 26–7 nn46, 47, where the work is dated to the eighth century with amplifications in the ninth and tenth centuries. The scholiast surrounded the biblical text with a commentary; Andrew Brown has shown that Erasmus relied heavily on the scholiast's text for his text of the Pauline Epistles; see ASD VI-3 4–5, also x and xii for the photographic reproductions of a manuscript of the scholiast's text and commentary.

312 Cf the annotation on Rom 1:4 ('who was predestined'); for his rank as first among theologians see the annotation on 2 Cor 11:2 (*aemulor enim vos*); and for his heretical views see the annotation on Rom 9:5 ('who is above all things God') CWE 56 243–4, noting the *1519* additions.

of Hilary in the annotation on Matthew 21:9 (*Osanna filio David*): Hilary knew no Hebrew, which led him into an embarrassing mistake on the interpretation of the word 'Hosanna' – embarrassing because mindless. Erasmus' comments on Augustine sometimes suggest a quasi-personal relationship with the great African bishop, giving him a presence on stage, as it were. He speaks, for instance, of Augustine's youthful failure to learn Greek in the unforgiving tones of an unforgiving teacher who cannot quite admire the later success of a former unwilling pupil.[313] His comparison of Augustine with Jerome became a cause célèbre among his critics: Augustine, he said, is 'so inferior [to Jerome] in his knowledge of sacred literature that it is utterly shameless to compare one with another,' a comment so offensive that it was omitted from all subsequent editions.[314] While Jerome appears as the great scholar, he is by no means free from error, or even, perhaps, from deceit. Jerome's diligence is suggested by the story that he learned his Hebrew by night under the tutelage of the Jew Baranina.[315] Jerome was, however, willing to connive in order to maintain his view that the apostles always quoted from the Hebrew Old Testament. In his annotation on Matthew 26:31 (*percutiam pastorem*) Erasmus offers a summary portrait: 'Either I am dreaming or Jerome is in error – a man, I acknowledge, of the deepest learning, similar eloquence, incomparable sanctity – still I cannot deny he was a man.'

*(ii) Medieval*

In the annotations of *1516* the most pervasive of all the medieval commentators was Theophylact, whose Greek texts, one of the Gospels and one of the Pauline Epistles, Erasmus found in the Dominican library in Basel.[316] Theophylact's Greek text was accompanied by commentary. Erasmus calls him the 'Greek interpreter,' and a recent one at that – 'for those who prefer to believe a modern' – yet he did not hesitate to distinguish Theophylact's

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313 Cf the annotation on John 8:25 (*principium qui et loquor*) ASD VI-6 109:782–861 (critical apparatus). The deprecatory remarks were removed in *1519;* cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* (Note 93) CWE 72 214 with n808. In the *Vita Hieronymi*, composed for the Jerome edition (1516), Erasmus had likewise affirmed the superiority of Jerome to Augustine, CWE 61 45, 54.

314 Cf the annotation on John 21:22 (*sic eum volo manere*) ASD VI-6 171:171–93 (critical apparatus).

315 Annotation on Gal 3:13 (*maledictus omnis qui pendet in ligno*); cf *Vita Hieronymi* CWE 61 34–5.

316 Cf the annotation on 1 Cor 15:51 (*omnes quidem resurgemus*) ASD VI-8 304:654–6.

interpretation from that of the 'moderns.'[317] On occasion he placed Theophylact's comments with those of the Greek scholia and recognized that he followed Chrysostom.[318] He expressed warm approval of him: 'no careless interpreter of the Pauline Epistles,' a man whose commentaries were 'by no means to be rejected.'[319] It was only while working on the second edition that Erasmus acquired a fuller knowledge of the man and his commentary.[320]

Of medieval Latin exegetes Erasmus cites three with some regularity in this first edition: Thomas Aquinas (1225–74), Hugh of St Cher (died 1263), and Nicholas of Lyra (died 1349).[321] The inclusion of these exegetes, along with the Latin humanist scholars, brought to the annotations a fully extended tradition of biblical scholarship. At the same time, the medieval scholars tended to serve as a foil, adding both lustre and authority to the patristic exegetes due to Erasmus' frequently pejorative comments about the former. Of the three only Thomas is able to stand more or less on the same footing as the ancient Christian Fathers and to contribute to the discussion in a manner that made dialogue with these Fathers possible. Though Thomas had commented on the Gospels and had compiled an important *Catena* of patristic citations on the Gospels, his systematic work as a New Testament exegete is to be found primarily in his commentaries on the Epistles then regarded as Pauline, including Hebrews, and on the Catholic Epistles. The *1516* annotations offer no overt evidence that Erasmus consulted Thomas' commentaries on the Catholic Epistles, but his citations from Thomas' commentaries on the Pauline Epistles reflect his recognition that Thomas possessed to some degree an understanding of some of the basic principles of the exegetical task and the place of philology in it: that the biblical text had variants and the exegete had to strive for a correct reading where available

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317 Cf the annotations on Rom 8:29 ('whom he foreknew') and Luke 19:42 (*quia si cognovisses et tu* [from *1516* to *1527*, *nunc autem quae ad pacem*]).

318 Cf respectively the annotations on 2 Cor 8:23 (*gloriae Christi*) and John 8:25 (*principium qui et loquor*).

319 Cf the annotations on 2 Cor 10:12 (*sed ipsi in nobis*) and Eph 4:14 (*in nequitia hominum*). Cf also the annotation on Matt 1:23 (*et vocabitur nomen eius*), where Theophylact is said to be a Greek and 'even though a modern [*recentior*] should certainly not be rejected.'

320 In *1516* Erasmus knew the author of the commentaries as Vulgarius. For his discovery of Vulgarius as 'Theophylact' see 'New Testament Scholarship' 132 with n554. Theophylact was an eleventh-century archbishop of Ochrida in Bulgaria (d c 1108).

321 Hugh and Nicholas 'were the authors of the two most widely used commentaries on the Bible in the Middle Ages' CWE 44 134 n12.

codices could be consulted;[322] and that helpful readings could be derived from Greek commentaries translated into Latin.[323] Erasmus noted, moreover, that Thomas was prepared to resolve by conjecture difficulties that impeded the good sense of Scripture.[324] Indeed, in a somewhat sweeping statement, Erasmus affirmed that Thomas alone of all the *recentiores* was accustomed to consult the *fontes*, that is, the sources themselves.[325]

Nevertheless, in Erasmus' view Thomas generally failed as an exegete, and he failed first because he was a child of his age, and second because he lacked Greek and thus had to rely entirely on the Vulgate; indeed some of his mistakes could be imputed to the Translator. He frequently offered multiple interpretations of a passage – two, three, even four – which would have been unnecessary if he had known Greek. Ignorant of Greek, he twisted every way, like Proteus, to free himself from the difficulty of a passage.[326] Conscious of the obligations of an exegete, he will even leave a phrase without a comment to conceal his inability to understand.[327] Lacking Greek, he makes incorrect distinctions and derives impossible etymologies.[328] Unable to consult the Greek, he loses his way by philosophizing on Latin words and even by looking for Aristotelian definitions and Platonic ideas.[329] 'What else could Thomas do,' asks Erasmus, 'since he was ignorant of Greek? The more zealously he laboured, the further he strayed – necessarily – like a man who has lost his way, the faster he runs, the farther he wanders.'[330] 'How foolish the fiction cherished by some theologians that St Paul appeared to Thomas in a dream saying that no one before Thomas had understood his Epistles!'[331]

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322 Cf the annotations on Rom 4:17 ('that I have made you the father of many nations') and 1 Cor 11:10 (*velamen habere*).
323 Cf the annotation on 1 Cor 7:17 (*nisi unicuique*).
324 Cf the annotation on 1 Cor 12:26 (*sive gloriatur*).
325 Cf the annotation on Rom 2:24 ('is blasphemed') CWE 56 87 with n12, where, however, it is observed that this comment was omitted from the annotation beginning with the third edition.
326 Cf the annotations on Rom 1:4 ('who was predestined') and 11:11 ('that they may emulate them'); also on Col 2:15 (*traduxit*) and 1 Tim 2:15 (*si permanserit*).
327 Cf the annotation on 1 Tim 1:10 (*plagiariis*).
328 Cf the annotation on Heb 5:11 (*et interpretabilis ad dicendum*).
329 Cf the annotations on 2 Cor 8:8 (*vestrae charitatis ingenium bonum*), Phil 2:6 (*esse se aequalem Deo*) ASD VI-9 292:279–81, and Col 1:15 (*primogenitus omnis creaturae*).
330 Cf the annotation on 2 Cor 8:8 (cf preceding note).
331 Cf the annotation on 1 Cor 9:13 (*qui altero deserviunt*). The story is recalled again in the annotation on 1 Tim 2:15 (*si permanserit*). One should note Erasmus' reflection in Ep 1211:467–83 on his changing conception of Thomas Aquinas.

By its very conception, Erasmus' New Testament project called into question the prestige of Thomas.

Neither Hugh of St Cher nor Nicholas of Lyra is cited with frequency in the annotations of *1516* – very seldom, in fact, in those on the Pauline Epistles. For Erasmus they represent together the forlorn state of the foundations of medieval scriptural hermeneutics. There is, to be sure, a subtle difference between the two. If Lyra does not command respect, he receives less disrespect than Hugh. Even when he is right, as he sometimes is, he does not receive the commendation occasionally awarded Thomas, and he does not escape some of the contempt so effusively poured on Hugh. It is in sarcasm that Lyra is called 'an approved doctor,' 'a weighty interpreter of Scripture,' 'a fine fellow' remarkable for his 'diligence.'[332] Hugh is a 'pillar of theology,' 'more fit to drive a coach than to be an exegete,' an interpreter 'who deserves a beating' for 'the fecundity of his ignorance.'[333] These men, but especially Hugh, offer incorrect, sometimes silly, even stupid interpretations, impossible etymologies, erroneous identifications. Erasmus leaves no doubt about the connection he sees between these men and the theologians of his own world. In the annotation on 1 Timothy 4:15 (*haec meditare*), he calls Hugh 'a *mateologian* … more than a theologian,' an exemplar of Erasmus' own contemporaries who in pursuing theology were in danger of falling into *mateology*, that is, vain talk.[334] 'While we read their trifles as though they were oracles, while we grow old in them, we become like those whose writing we read,' a point he had made in the *Methodus* and the *Ratio*.[335] Hugh and Nicholas serve as symbols of methodological failure and thus as a warning to all who would undertake biblical scholarship without the benefit of a humanist education.

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332 Cf respectively the annotations on Luke 22:36 (*sed nunc qui habet sacculum*) ASD VI-5 585:707, 1 Cor 5:9–10 (*1535*, *commisceamini fornicariis*; *1516–27*, *cum fornicariis*) and Rom 16:25 (cue phrase omitted from VG; cf CWE 56 436).

333 Cf respectively the annotations on 2 Cor 3:7 (*literis deformata*), Luke 22:36 (cf preceding note; a comment omitted, however, in *1527* and *1535*) ASD VI-5 587:711–56 (critical apparatus), 2 Tim 3:2 (*seipsos amantes*), and James 2:13 (*superexaltat autem misericordia iu*[*dicium*]).

334 Cf the annotation on 1 Tim 4:15 (*haec meditare*) – from *1522* Erasmus omitted the name calling in this annotation. In the annotation on 1 Tim 1:6 (*in vaniloquium*) Erasmus had not too subtly implied that the theologians of his own day were 'mateologians,' that is, men who spent their time fighting over frivolous trifles.

335 For the citation see the annotation on John 19:13 (*lithostratus* [*1535*], *licostratus* [*1516*], *lichostratus* [*1519–27*]); for the *Methodus* see 451; for the *Ratio*, 495 and 698.

'God immortal,' says Erasmus, 'how I would vent my anger upon them if Christian modesty did not prevent me.'[336]

*(iii) Renaissance*

While occasionally Erasmus looked to several Renaissance humanists, especially Budé and Reuchlin, for philological support in his *Annotations* of 1516, there are two exegetes whose work he followed fairly systematically: Lorenzo Valla in the work published by Erasmus as the *Annotations*, and Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples in his 1512 edition of the *Commentary on the Fourteen Epistles of Paul*. Valla is referenced most frequently where Erasmus lacked commentaries, in Acts and Revelation, but he appears abundantly elsewhere also.[337] As in the case of other exegetes, Valla is presented to the reader as a living person, but even more so than some others. Indeed, in Valla Erasmus seems to create a persona that reflects himself, but at the same time in such a way that Valla's critical extravaganzas commend by comparison the restraint of Erasmus. Valla has a skeptical frame of mind when confronting difficulties in the scriptural narratives.[338] Erasmus points also to the essentially historical perspective from which Valla read the New Testament.[339] And yet Valla was frequently mistaken, sometimes unaccountably so.[340] Nevertheless, Valla's engagement in the discussion is felt as immediate and personal, a sense effected partly by the manner in which he is cited: Valla thinks, judges, prefers, quibbles, quarrels, blames, corrects, refutes, lashes. He is presented as

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336 Cf the annotations on 2 Pet 1:16 (*virtutem et praescientiam*) and 1 Pet 3:7 (*honorem impartientes*), where, however, the comment was omitted after *1522* ASD VI-10 458:369 (critical apparatus). See further the *Contra morosos* paragraph 61 with n168 for Erasmus' disrespect for Hugh and Lyra, and paragraph 62 for the hostility aroused by Erasmus' mockery of these men.

337 Erika Rummel has shown that Erasmus sometimes follows Valla even where he does not specifically name him; cf Rummel *Erasmus' Annotations* 87–8. In fact, Erasmus' contemporary López Zúñiga accused Erasmus not only of borrowing much from Valla but of taking over Valla's words; cf *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae* ASD IX-2 154:830–9 with 833n; cf also ASD VI-3 16. For Lefèvre's commentary see 'New Testament Scholarship' 99 with n406.

338 As in the apparent contradictions in the several accounts of Paul's conversion, cf the annotation on Acts 22:9 (*et qui mecum erant lumen quidem viderunt*).

339 As in his identification of Dionysius the Areopagite, cf the annotation on Acts 17:34 (*in quibus et Dionysius)*; similarly in the evidence drawn from the text to support the view that the apostles had wives, cf the annotation on 1 Cor 9:5 (*sororem mulierculam* [*1519–35*], *sororem mulierem* [*1516*]).

340 Cf the annotation on 2 Cor 11:1 (*utinam sustineretis modicum*).

an acerbic personality, at times 'venting his anger a little too freely for some to endure,'[341] occasionally indulging in sardonic laughter, which though deserved, is 'too light and lively for a serious man.'[342] Yet it was just such a man who pointed the way towards placing rhetoric at the service of theology: 'I cannot,' says Erasmus, 'with sufficient emphasis approve the diligence of Lorenzo Valla, who, though he was a rhetorician as is commonly supposed – and certainly he never professed theology – nevertheless investigated with such great care the texts of sacred literature, where they disagreed or agreed or were corrupt, whereas today there are so many theologians, I dare say thousands, who are so far from taking advantage of this ingenious dexterity of wit in comparison and investigation that they do not even know in what language the apostles wrote … dumbfounded when by chance they hear that [they] wrote in Greek.'[343]

Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples plays a particularly interesting role in the *Annotations* of *1516*. On the one hand, he enters into the discussion along with the figures of the past, so that his presence as a contemporary of Erasmus helps to assure that the voices of the past are projected into the present in a dialogue of biblical scholars from all ages who share a living tradition. Further, he has a reputation as a humanist competent in philology. Accordingly, in the first reference to him in the annotations on the Pauline Epistles he is introduced with the fullest praise: '… an outstanding man and my incomparable friend … whom I never mention except to do him honour … I strongly approve of his ardent zeal to restore good literature … I admire his erudition. I sincerely love his unusual cordiality … I revere his singular holiness of life … Accordingly, no one should take it as an insult if I disagree with him … I would bear with equanimity the same kind of treatment … would even consider it the greatest of favours, provided malice is absent.'[344] In fact, it has been shown that Erasmus frequently borrows translations from Lefèvre.[345]

This assurance of Erasmus' intent of good will towards and acknowledgment of Lefèvre as a distinguished humanist serves as a backdrop against which Erasmus refers in more than forty places to Lefèvre's commentary on

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341 Cf the annotation on 1 Cor 9:13 (*qui altario deserviunt*).
342 Cf the annotation on Mark 7:34 (*adaperire*).
343 Cf the annotation on Acts 22:9 (*et qui mecum erant lumen quidem viderunt*).
344 Annotation on Rom 1:5 ('for his name'); for Erasmus' praise of Lefèvre as a humanist see 75 with n307 above.
345 Cf ASD VI-3 15.

the Pauline Epistles, in almost every one of them subtly casting doubt upon Lefèvre's competence as a philologist: Lefèvre's text does not always comply with the evidence of the witnesses; he sometimes misunderstands the Greek, whether the semantics of a word or the significance of grammatical forms; at points he misconstrues the Greek sentence; his choice of Latin words to represent the Greek fails on occasion to be accurate; in the famous citation from Epimenides in Titus 1:12 he attempts a clumsy Latin verse translation. Perhaps most incriminating of all criticisms, he does not recognize the pseudonymous character of the 'Pauline' Epistle to the Laodiceans, due to the fact that though a learned man, his unsuspecting guilelessness makes him an easy victim of deception. Indeed Erasmus would be pleased to imitate Lefèvre's guileless simplicity if it did not lead to deference to the unlearned, to contempt for great authors and their literary remains, and, for young men of promise, either to discouragement in their study of literature or to infection with the same disease.[346] Thus Lefèvre's weak philology concealed dangers for the entire humanistic enterprise.[347] Both Valla and Lefèvre made mistakes, but Lefèvre's mistakes were insidious, Valla's were not.

## III THE *PARAPHRASE ON ROMANS* (1516–17)

### The Biographical Context

Following the publication of the *Novum instrumentum* in March 1516 Erasmus remained briefly in Basel, completing his work for the Jerome edition and the *Institutio principis christiani*, a treatise intended for Charles, to whose council Erasmus had been appointed.[348] As a new councillor, Erasmus wished to attend court and so left Basel for Brabant in May. The move facilitated consultations about a canonry available for him at Courtrai, a benefice he could accept only with a papal dispensation. He attempted to negotiate the dispensation through Andrea Ammonio, the papal nuncio in London, and Silvestro Gigli, bishop of Worcester, then currently the English agent at the

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346 Cf the annotation on Col 4:16 (*et cum lecta fuerit*).

347 Erasmus' protestations suggest that he was not altogether comfortable in these annotations with his treatment of Lefèvre's work. See his preface to vol ii part 3 of his 1516 edition of Jerome, CWE 61 96 (Ep 326:95–111), and his *Apologia ad Fabrum* (1517) CWE 83 7–9. Cf also his response to Maarten van Dorp, Ep 337:876–94, especially 890–4.

348 Cf Epp 370:18n and 393:76n.

court in Rome.[349] It was chiefly this need for a dispensation that motivated a visit to England in August 1516.[350] From England Erasmus returned to the Netherlands, where he stayed with Pieter Gillis in Antwerp for a month, then moved to Brussels for the autumn and early winter, where he could attend the court. In February 1517 he moved once again back to Antwerp to live with the household of Pieter Gillis.[351] Thus the months since he had completed his New Testament constituted an unsettled period during which his preoccupation with the dispensation became an obsession. Although the dispensation had been granted on 26 January 1517, Erasmus was still without news of it on 24 February, when he wrote to Andrea Ammonio: 'I have been expecting the message of salvation for a long time now. If it fails, your Erasmus is lost, like the beans at the end of the row.'[352] The good news reached Erasmus between 11 and 15 March, though it came with the requirement that he return to England 'to receive from the hands of Ammonio the absolution and dispensation granted by the pope.'[353] Erasmus hurried off to England in April 1517, received the dispensation, and returned to Antwerp in May, again to the house of Pieter Gillis. During June and early July he was with the court in Ghent and Bruges, thereafter settling in Louvain. It appears that it was immediately on his return from England, while living with the Gillis family and jubilant in the absolution and dispensation so recently granted by the pope, that Erasmus undertook to write the *Paraphrase on Romans*.

We have only a few indicators to suggest the motivation for the composition of the *Paraphrase on Romans* at this time. Paraphrase was a well-known and widely practised genre. Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples had at an early point in his career published 'paraphrases of Aristotle's writings on natural philosophy.'[354] Gillis van Delft, a long-time member of the faculty of theology at the University of Paris had made verse paraphrases of parts of Scripture,

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349 For the canonry see Epp 436, 443; and for the dispensation see Epp 446 introduction, 518, and 519. The dispensation was crucial at this time if Erasmus was to hold more than one benefice (he already received an annuity from a benefice in England granted in 1512; cf Ep 255 introduction), but Erasmus sought a dispensation that eliminated other difficulties as well; cf Ep 517 introduction.

350 Cf Ep 441 introduction. Erasmus also wished to collect his annuity, which was a more or less constant source of trouble for him; cf Ep 410 introduction.

351 For further details of Erasmus' movements at this time see 'New Testament Scholarship' 96–7.

352 Ep 539:13–14

353 Ep 566 introduction; cf Ep 552.

354 CEBR II 315

including the Epistle to the Romans, published in 1507.[355] Erasmus himself, as a young man, had made an abridged version of Valla's *Elegantiae*, a version that he would eventually publish under the title of 'Paraphrase.'[356] Indeed, Erasmus had already, in effect, used paraphrase to expound Scripture, for example in his debate with Colet on Christ's agony in the garden.[357] His choice of Romans may be explained by the long prevalent view that the Epistle to the Romans represented among the Epistles the most comprehensive statement of Pauline theology and was consequently widely favoured by theologians for exposition. Erasmus, as we have seen, had already attempted an exposition of the Epistle more than a decade earlier, giving up after he had completed four volumes because, as he said, he lacked Greek.[358] And Romans did, after all, stand first among the Epistles in the canon. As we shall presently see, however, it may be that a single *Paraphrase* on the Epistle to the Romans was not Erasmus' original intention; his first proposal to Froben was evidently a *Paraphrase* on the apostolic Epistles.[359]

In any case, it is not surprising that in the summer of 1516, countering criticism arising from his 'audacious' attempt to translate Scripture afresh, he should appeal to the paraphrase as an accepted and irenic form of biblical exposition: 'Suppose I had expounded all the books by way of a paraphrase, and made it possible to keep the sense inviolate and yet to read them without stumbling and understand them more easily. Would they [his critics] quarrel with me then?'[360] Thus by mid-summer of 1516, perhaps earlier, the possibility, even the desirability, of paraphrasing Scripture was in the mind of Erasmus.

It appears that from an early point in 1517 Froben was eagerly seeking from Erasmus material for publication. When on 20 January Erasmus wrote to Pieter Gillis in Antwerp inviting himself to move in with his friend, he indicated that he was getting 'ready what he could send to Basel.'[361] Two months later, in a somewhat effusive report of opportunities awaiting him, he claimed to be entirely 'immersed in composition,' for he was 'getting ready

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355 Cf Ep 456:97–8 with 98n and CEBR I 382–3.
356 Cf Ep 23 108n.
357 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 12 with n63.
358 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 13 with n74.
359 Cf immediately below with n364.
360 Ep 456:93–6. Erasmus had hinted at the possibility of a paraphrase already in the *Apologia* of 1516 prefatory to the *Novum instrumentum*: 'What was the danger had I changed the whole text into a paraphrase?' 466.
361 Ep 516:11

some things to send to Basel.'[362] Precisely what new compositions Erasmus intended to offer Froben was apparently still obscure when Beatus Rhenanus suggested that Froben was virtually begging for copy: 'Whatever you send them, new compositions, revisions, translations, your own or other people's they will gladly accept.'[363] By 10 May Erasmus had responded with an offer: a *Paraphrase* on the apostolic Epistles.[364] In the end, the work he produced at this time was a *Paraphrase* not on the apostolic Epistles but on Romans only, which he would offer first not to Froben in Basel but to Martens in Louvain.

The apparent change in plan to write a paraphrase not on all the Epistles but on only Romans may, one might conjecture, reflect a change, perhaps even as he began to write, in Erasmus' conceptualization of the kind of paraphrase he wished to publish. Avoiding a paraphrase that was little more than a free translation, he would write one that offered a rich exposition of the text. Writing to Cardinal Grimani, the dedicatee of the *Paraphrase on Romans*, he modestly declined to say 'how much this small work has cost me,' but added that the labour was almost the equivalent of writing a 'full dress commentary.'[365]

**Erasmus' Paraphrastic Manner**

Though there will be some noticeable developments in Erasmus' paraphrastic manner, particularly in the more extensive use of allegory in the *Paraphrases* on the Gospels, the fundamental character of all Erasmus' *Paraphrases* was established in the *Paraphrase on Romans*. The Erasmian *Paraphrase* was to be an *explanatio*, a 'clarification' of the text. Erasmus seems to have understood the expression perhaps above all as a narrative that brought to the surface the assumptions that underlay the explicit language of the text, thus placing the assumptions on a level plane with the text itself. The first ten words of the Epistle to the Romans become ten lines in the *Paraphrase* on the Epistle as they narrate the biography of Paul implicit in the words of the text. But clarification also meant elucidating the connotation of the biblical words,

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362 Ep 551:12–13. Froben did publish a new edition of *De copia* in April, but it offered only a few slight changes, CWE 24 281; cf Ep 581:19. During the spring at Gillis' house Erasmus may also have been working on an edition of Suetonius; cf Epp 515:11–14, 586 introduction, 648 introduction, and 'New Testament Scholarship' n425 below.

363 Ep 575:10–11

364 Ep 581:24

365 Ep 710:28, 40–1.

sharpening the outlines of the biblical narrative through summaries, through the occasional recapitulation of the thought, as well as through the use of connectives, sometimes elaborate, to mark the relationship of ideas as the biblical text moves forward.[366]

It is evident from the *Paraphrases*, however, that Erasmus wished not only to clarify and enlarge the biblical text but also to enrich it. He did so in the first place by incorporating the interpretations he found in the commentaries of the church Fathers, sometimes their actual language. The extent to which he did so may be gauged by the references assiduously noted in the *Collected Works of Erasmus* volumes devoted to the *Paraphrases*. He further enlarged the sense of the biblical text by bringing to a paraphrase through suggestive allusion the recollection of other biblical texts. He understood the power of both drama and rhetoric to enrich a text that may in itself be plain. Though he strove for a middle style, he frequently adorned a passage with effective rhythms and beautiful images. In the paraphrase on the last verse of Romans 3 there is fine drama in the heated dialogue between Paul and a Jewish interlocutor. The narrative progresses with a series of balanced and contrasting clauses, and concludes with two striking images: 'For something is not abolished when it is restored to a better condition – no more than when fruit follows the blossoms that fall from the trees, or when a body takes the place of a shadow.'[367]

It is also evident that Erasmus endeavoured in the very act of clarifying the original historic text to point to its 'meaning' for Christian life in the past and present, and so to make it speak to his own contemporary generation. Here and there key words point, if sometimes slyly, to contemporary issues: baptism, ceremonies, superstition. Personal pronouns in the original text – 'you,' 'we' – can be generalized to refer ambiguously to the contemporary reader, while abstract statements invite a temporally ambiguous application when they are attached to people – 'the one who,' 'those who.' The use of temporal phrases – 'today,' 'now' – obscures the distinction between the past and present, and makes the Bible refer at once to the 'today' of both the addressee of ancient times and to the reader of Erasmus' contemporary world.

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366 For a further definition of the nature of the Erasmian paraphrase see 'The *Paraphrases* of Erasmus: Origin and Character' CWE 42 xi–xix.

367 Paraphrase on Rom 3:31 CWE 42 26. For other examples of an effective rhetorical flourish see eg the paraphrases on Matt 1:19–20 CWE 45 42–3 and 1 Cor 15:37 CWE 43 186.

It should be briefly noted that Erasmus did not paraphrase 'verse by verse.'[368] While he attempted to represent in paraphrase each clause in the Greek or Latin Bible, his vision as he paraphrased extended to the larger context, both the immediate context of a particular clause, reflecting ideas that were implicit in the words or clauses that preceded or followed, and the more distant context of chapter, even of book. For example, in the *Paraphrase on Romans* the first seven verses of the biblical text provide images, explicit and implicit, that are key to Erasmus' understanding of the Epistle and that will be introduced at various points later in the *Paraphrase*: subjection and freedom, Law and Gospel, past and present, the obsolete and the new, death and resurrection, peace, strife, harassment, and distress. Thus, while Erasmus in paraphrasing focuses sharply on the immediate clause, the meaning he intended to give the clause is shaped by his understanding of its context and should not be interpreted in isolation from that context.

## The Text

### *The Dedication and the Argument*

Erasmus dedicated the *Paraphrase on Romans* to Domenico Grimani, cardinal bishop of Porto.[369] His choice of the cardinal as the dedicatee seems to have been motivated by both self-interest and gratitude. He had become personally acquainted with the cardinal when he was in Rome in 1509, and he retained a lasting memory of the cardinal's affability and the deference the cardinal paid him. The memory was still vivid in 1531 when he had occasion to describe the visit: the cardinal had invited him to remain in Rome and to enjoy bed and board in his luxurious palace, where, Erasmus noted, there was a magnificent multilingual library.[370] Certainly Erasmus had reason to be

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368 Our present verse system was instituted by Robert Estienne, publisher, Paris and Geneva, in 1551, only after Erasmus' death (NCE 5 374).

369 Erasmus claimed that he had originally proposed to dedicate the *Paraphrase* to Albert of Brandenburg but decided that 'what was written to the Romans should be addressed to them'; cf Ep 745:14–23. Erasmus may well have hoped that with a dedication to Grimani his work would help to strengthen the bond he had already begun to forge with the Roman humanists in 1509. For Grimani as cardinal of St Mark's see *Contra morosos* paragraph 110a with n285.

370 Cf Ep 2465:12–60 and 'New Testament Scholarship' 22 with n126. Grimani was a collector not only of books but of antiquities as well. The Correr Museum in Venice exhibits three remarkable sculptures credited to Grimani's collection, Roman copies (AD second century) of Greek originals.

Medallion with figure of Domenico Grimani,
dedicatee of the *Paraphrase on Romans*
National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

grateful. But in 1517 Erasmus would have known that Grimani was a powerful and influential man whose friendship he might well cultivate. Already in 1515 he had called upon the cardinal (along with the eminent cardinal Raffaele Riario) to exert influence on Pope Leo to secure the pope's approval of his edition of Jerome;[371] in 1518 he again sought the cardinal's aid to secure the pope's endorsement of his second edition of the New Testament.[372] At that time he still did not know that in November 1517 the cardinal had fallen out of favour with Pope Leo and had left Rome. There is no evidence that Grimani ever acknowledged the dedicatory letter.

The dedicatory letter breathes the spirit of Christian humanism. It implicitly acknowledges the power of the written word to give access to the authors of Scripture as living persons, who were ready to encounter Christians of the Renaissance just as they encountered the ancient people to whom they wrote, an encounter facilitated by hearing their voices in the speech to which sophisticated people of the Renaissance were accustomed, that is, in authentic, therefore clear and attractive, Latin. The letter also appeals to the humanist commitment to restoration. A conviction indulged by Romans, fed by the Roman passion for the recovery and restoration of the city's buried antiquities, and encouraged by popes like Julius II, that Rome once pagan but now Christian should exert its power over an empire is reflected in the stirring contrast between the ancient and the modern Rome: ancient pagan Rome is born again as the capital of the Christian world. In the contrast, the distance between past and present is collapsed; the Paul of primitive Christianity speaks to the modern Roman as he did to the ancient Roman, inviting a restoration that implictly transforms secular ambition into Erasmian piety: 'O Romans, Romans, learn what Paul did for you, and you will understand what the glories are that you must maintain … He praises faith … he speaks of obedience … he marks your proud spirit …'[373] There is, finally, the explicit praise of 'good literature' when Erasmus extols 'the city of Rome under Leo the tenth … a flourishing home of literature no less than of religion; the one place that combines so many leaders of the church, so many men distinguished for learning.'[374]

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371 Cf Epp 333:67–111, 334:143–70.
372 Cf Epp 860:26–9 (26 August 1518), 864 introduction, and 865:21–9 (1 October 1518).
373 Ep 710:82–90
374 Ep 710:108–11

The Argument Erasmus wrote for the *Paraphrase on Romans* is remarkable for its extent and may in this respect represent the kind of Argument Erasmus might have preferred to write for the other Epistles, most of which received a much shorter Argument.[375] Erasmus' Argument for Romans is actually a full-scale introduction to the Epistle: a consideration of the author, the audience, the historical background reflected in the message to the Romans, a description of the primary themes of the Epistle, and an analysis of the major difficulties that obstructed easy comprehension. Significantly, the old Argument that preceded the text of the Epistle in the Vulgate New Testament is reflected in Erasmus' new Argument when the latter articulates one of the purposes of the Epistle: to call the Roman Christians away from the Judaizing form of Christian faith to which they had been introduced, and to call them to an 'authentic Christianity' entirely free from the Law and the ceremonies of the Jews.

*Erasmus and the Pauline Vision in the Epistle to the Romans*

In spite of the length of the *Paraphrase*, which is vastly greater than the Epistle itself, and the meticulous elaboration of clause after clause, the *Paraphrase* does not lose the Apostle's culminating vision of Jew and gentile in the unfolding purpose of God, of universal history beginning with Adam and ending with the consummation of all things, a vision articulated so passionately in the biblical text of chapters 9–11. In the first eight chapters, however, the *Paraphrase* tends to generalize the human situation in such a way that the narrative of saving-history finds much of its significance in relation to the individual. In chapters 9–11 the focus of interpretive interest moves from the individual to race and nationality.

In the narrative of chapters 1–8 the *Paraphrase* accentuates sharply the complementary roles of the Law and of faith. In Erasmus' representation, the Mosaic law had its positive aspects: it revealed transgression, and through our inability to fulfil its commands it revealed to us the kindness of God in delivering us from its tyranny; it was a training ground for righteousness; it promised a Saviour and foreshadowed Christ.[376] But critics were not entirely wrong in complaining that in the representation of the Law the stronger

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375 For Erasmus' *Arguments* as a whole, prepared for the second edition of the New Testament, see 'New Testament Scholarship' 112 with nn481, 482.

376 Cf eg the paraphrases on Rom 3:20–31, 5:20–6:1, 7:4 (CWE 42 24–6, 33, 36, and 41).

impression made by Erasmus' paraphrases was decidedly negative:[377] disobedience to its commandments brought guilt and stirred the deity to anger; not only did the Law have no power to enable us to fulfil its commands, its prohibitions actually fanned the flame of desire, 'arousing a whole troop of passions.'[378] Only in Christ could the Law find its fulfilment, making obsolete the carnal part of the Law (that is, the images and commandments through which it prefigured and prepared for Christ) and giving effect to the spiritual part – the rule of love that acts without the instigation of commands.[379]

When Erasmus wrote the *Paraphrase on Romans*, he recognized quite clearly the central role of faith in Paul's argument in the Epistle. While some minor changes were made in the early re-editions, in the later edition of 1532 numerous major changes were made directed towards the elucidation of the place of faith in Paul's argument. Significant as these later changes may be, the basic lines in the representation of faith were established in 1517, and the ambiguities found in this first edition generally remain in the later editions.

In the *Paraphrase* the place of faith in salvation is fairly clearly indicated in the last lines of chapter 4 and the first of chapter 5. God has become hostile to us because of human sin; to overcome God's hostility we can offer God nothing, since God needs nothing from us and wants only our trust. Thus we make peace with God not by works but by the commendation and 'merit' of faith. This is possible because Christ's death has reconciled God to us.[380]

The concept of faith as it appears in the *Paraphrase* is not without ambiguities. Living faith does not search for proofs, does not hesitate in order to consider probabilities, but simply trusts the one who makes the promises;[381] and yet faith is confirmed by conjectural evidence – the resurrection of

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377 Cf the large section (Topic 9) in *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas*, where Erasmus defends himself against eight censures ('propositions') directed towards his representation of the Law in the *Paraphrases*, CWE 82 90–113; cf also the references in the footnotes there to his response to Béda, who had previously criticized the *Paraphrases* for what he regarded as a misrepresentation of the Law.

378 For the quotation see CWE 42 42 (paraphrase on Rom 7:8); for the preceding allusions see CWE 42 29 and 42 (paraphrases on Rom 4:15 and 7:4–8 respectively).

379 Cf eg the paraphrases on Rom 3:31, 4:24, 8:3, and 8:13 (CWE 42 26, 32, 45, and 47).

380 Cf CWE 42 32. For the 'merit' of faith see the paraphrases on 4:13, 16 and 9:14 (CWE 42 29, 30, and 55).

381 Paraphrase on 4:18–19 CWE 42 31

Christ, the promises of the prophets, the witness of the apostles.[382] Faith is a 'matter of free will,' but we are drawn to faith by the divine beneficence.[383] The *Paraphrase* speaks of the '"merit" of faith' (from *1521* 'merit of trust') but insists that salvation is a 'matter of grace and unowed kindness.'[384] We are saved *sola fide* 'by faith alone,'[385] and yet the 'faith alone' that justifies applies to the past; once justified, Christians through obedience to Christ obtain for themselves justice, 'that is, the harmony and concord of all the virtues.'[386]

In chapters 9–11 of the biblical text Paul works out a theology of history, directing the reader's attention to the national destinies of Jew and gentile. Erasmus' paraphrases on these chapters move towards the Pauline vision, but with interesting ambiguities and complexities. In the paraphrase on chapter 9 the paraphrast invites the reader to look upon the historical events that lay at the foundation of the Israelite race – the birth of Isaac, the election of Jacob, the 'sojourn' in Egypt – primarily as images of faith and obedience with universal and timeless applicability to the personal life of individuals, an interpretive orientation characteristic of the paraphrase on the first part of chapter 10. At the same time, Erasmus' own particular vision of divine action in the history of the human race also finds a place in the paraphrase on these two chapters: Christ is seen as the dividing point between the age of Law and the age of grace: he is the goal (*scopus*) and the perfection (*perfectio*) of the Law, the function of which in saving-history was

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382 For the importance of evidence grasped by reason as a means by which faith is established see the paraphrases on 4:24 (*declarans* 'proving') CWE 42 32, 5:10 (*argumenta* 'proofs') CWE 42 34, 10:17–18 ('oracles fulfilled,' the apostles as *idonei testes* 'reliable witnesses') CWE 42 62. In the paraphrase on 10:7–8 there is an ironic ambiguity: faith does not require *documentum* 'proof' of the saving events but must rely on the evidence of witnesses – 'those who saw them done' CWE 42 60. Cf also the paraphrase on 8:29–31 CWE 42 50–1.

383 Paraphrase on 4:6 CWE 42 27–8. The question of free will in the election of saints was to become problematic for Erasmus; cf CWE 42 55 with n15.

384 Cf the paraphrases on 4:3–4, 4:16, and 9:14 (CWE 42 27 with n2, 30, and 55).

385 The expression appears repeatedly in the *Paraphrase* of 1517, eg 4:5, 4:11, 10:10–11 (CWE 42 27, 28, 61).

386 Cf the paraphrases on 4:15 and 6:16 (CWE 42 29 and 39). We should note that the language of faith found in this *Paraphrase* anticipates the language used in the great definition of faith in the *1527* annotation on Rom 1:17 ('from faith to faith'): *fides* 'faith' in the sense of belief, trust, trustworthiness; *fiducia* 'trust'; *diffido* 'mistrust'; *credo* 'believe'; *credulitas* 'readiness to believe'; *incredulitas* 'inclination to disbelieve'; *fides* in the abstract sense of the Christian faith; and *fideles* 'the body of Christian believers.'

to train a people for righteousness and to foreshadow the age of grace.[387] In the latter part of chapter 10 the ambiguity of time fades away when we hear the voice of the epistolary Paul speaking clearly in the setting of the apostolic age, identifying the heralds of the Gospel – those sent with beautiful feet to preach peace[388] – as the apostles themselves. In the paraphrase on chapter 11 the historical particularity of the first century comes into sharp focus in the anachronistic reference to the destruction of Jerusalem that occurred after the martyrdom of Paul, which in turn becomes the motivation for the repentance and conversion of the Jews in the Erasmian interpretation of the grand eschatological vision of Paul.[389]

## IV THE SECOND EDITION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT (1516–19)

### The Biographical Context

After the publication of the *Novum instrumentum*, Erasmus' achievements in New Testament scholarship increasingly emerged from a thickly meshed web of affairs in which he came to be inescapably involved. To understand this 'web of affairs' is to appreciate better the nature of his work and the course of his progress towards the second edition. He began his revision of the New Testament for a second edition at least as early as the autumn of 1516, while preoccupied with securing a dispensation from Pope Leo X. Later in the autumn and in the early winter he was in Brussels, available to the court as councillor to Charles, and in the following summer of 1517 he followed the court to Ghent and Bruges.[390] During this period he managed, with

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387 Cf the paraphrases on 9:30–2 and 10:1–4 CWE 42 58–9 and 60 (where *perfectio* is translated 'completion').

388 Cf the paraphrase on 10:14–15 CWE 42 61–2.

389 Cf the paraphrase on 11:25–36 CWE 42 67–8 with n10: 'Unlike most of the Fathers … Erasmus interprets the text [11:26] as teaching without qualification that the entire people of Israel will be saved.'

390 We may recall that the dispensation was an obsession with Erasmus when he began to think of writing paraphrases on the New Testament; cf 86 above, and for the dispensation see ibidem with n349. Erasmus' frequent relocations during this period are significant in the record both of his composition of the *Paraphrase on Romans* and of his preparation of the second edition of the New Testament; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' nn351, 436, and 441.

the help of Cuthbert Tunstall, an English representative to the court, to collate the texts for his new edition.

From Bruges he moved to Louvain in July. During the autumn he was clearly working on his New Testament, as his relations with Edward Lee indicate, but he was obliged to become very active as adviser and consultant in the foundation and development there of the Collegium Trilingue. Jérôme de Busleyden, a wealthy ecclesiastic, had died in August and had left a bequest to establish a college where the three biblical languages – Hebrew, Greek, and Latin – would be taught. This was, in effect, to institutionalize Erasmus' advocacy of the languages in the education of clergy, and he was eager to participate in the new venture. From 19 October 1517 to 26 April 1518 – only a few days before he left for Basel for the printing of his second edition – his correspondence reflects his negotiations with Gilles de Busleyden, Jérôme's brother and executor, his representations to the Louvain faculty on behalf of the proposed Collegium Trilingue, and his efforts to recruit faculty for the available positions.[391]

While he was preparing his second edition, Erasmus also sought to cultivate relations with the faculty of theology at the University of Louvain. Indeed, his letters, particularly in the autumn of 1517, after he had just moved to Louvain, suggest an almost obsessive concern for his relationship with the faculty. His anxiety had fairly deep roots. Maarten van Dorp's letter of September 1514 undoubtedly reflected the disapproval Erasmus had won from some members of the faculty for his *Moria*, and who were already then dissatisfied with the very idea of his New Testament project.[392] In December 1516, while still in Brussels, he reported that some wished 'to secure a public decree delegating the examination of [his] writings to the University of Louvain and its sister in Cologne.'[393] About May 1517 Jacob of Hoogstraten, inquisitor-general for the archbishoprics of Cologne, Mainz, and Trier, 'had allegedly talked about prosecuting Erasmus because of his New Testament.'[394] Thus the good will and support of the theologians of Louvain were an urgent desideratum if he were to live in Louvain.

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391 For Erasmus' support of the Collegium Trilingue in its relation to the University of Louvain see 'New Testament Scholarship' 153–7. For his tribute in the *Ratio* to Busleyden see 496 with n40.

392 Cf Ep 304:18–32 and 'New Testament Scholarship' 30 and 32.

393 Ep 505: 9–11; cf, however, Ep 505:15–16 where Erasmus expresses confidence that 'the best people are on[his] side.'

394 Ep 1006 introduction

Erasmus did not go to Louvain in July 1517 without, in fact, some assurance of the good will of the faculty of theology. Earlier, in January, when Erasmus was still in Brussels, Maarten van Dorp sent a letter 'from the College of Theologians' inviting him to dinner with some of his 'enthusiastic supporters' at the university,[395] and according to Dirk Martens, Erasmus had enjoyed a 'warm and friendly reception by the theologians.'[396] Erasmus was not entirely assured; he still feared that 'Louvain … would give him a grim reception in Lent,' even though he had made 'peace with the theologians, more or less.'[397] In fact, the theologians continued to urge him to move to Louvain.[398] After he arrived in July, his letters then and until mid-April 1518, when he began his move to Basel for the summer, are for the most part optimistic and reveal an Erasmus giving considerable attention to his association with the Louvain theologians. When he arrived in July 1517, they gave him 'quite a kind welcome'; he was 'popular with their leaders certainly, perhaps with them all,' and he reported moves to 'co-opt' him 'into their number.'[399] In November he claimed to 'enjoy the full dignity of a doctor' and attended 'assiduously (or nearly so) all the faculty meetings.'[400]

In the spring of 1518, however, qualifications begin to emerge in his correspondence. In March he could still describe his relation with the theologians as 'halcyon days,'[401] but the relationship was not without ambiguity. Although the leaders of the faculty approved his New Testament, there was 'barking' in the distance and behind his back.[402] In April, just before he left for Basel, he wrote that he 'gets on reasonably well with the theologians in Louvain,' but Cologne was 'little by little' becoming more critical.[403] When he returned from Basel in September, both Maarten van Dorp and Jan Briart, dean of the faculty of theology, demonstrated their good will by visiting him in spite of a severe and possibly contagious illness he had incurred. But the sky darkened. Writing to Budé on 22 December, he called certain self-named

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395 Ep 509:6–10
396 Ep 515:7–8
397 Ep 516:7–8
398 Cf Epp 551:15–16 (March), 584:45–6 (May).
399 Cf Epp 597:29, 640:5–6, 643:10–11, 694:4–5. On the 'co-optation' see Ep 637 12n: '… there is no independent proof that [Erasmus] was ever a member of the faculty of theology.'
400 Ep 695:20–2
401 Ep 794:34
402 Ep 794:36–8
403 Ep 821:18–21

theologians a 'tribe of monsters' and noted that Edward Lee, 'a little creature pale and skinny,' had arisen, who had his enthusiastic followers urging him on with their cries of 'Bravo.'[404]

Erasmus' hostile relations with Edward Lee, in fact, followed almost immediately upon a disconcerting quarrel with Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples, both men directly challenging aspects of Erasmus' New Testament scholarship.[405] In the second edition of his commentary on the Pauline Epistles, Lefèvre had in a lengthy excursus defended his own reading of Psalm 8:5, 'You have made him [that is, Christ] a little lower than God,' cited in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and denied Erasmus' interpretation of the verse, which made Christ a little lower than the angels.[406] As Erasmus was boarding a coach for the journey from Bruges to Louvain in early July, a friend apprised him of Lefèvre's critique, of which Erasmus was able to secure a copy on the spot and read it enroute to Louvain. Immediately on his arrival in Louvain, he began to compose a response, the *Apologia ad Fabrum*, published in late August.[407] While Erasmus had been stung by Lefèvre's accusation of impiety, heresy, and a 'carnal reading' of Scripture,[408] the quarrel reflected a fundamental difference in Christology, for Erasmus now, as in his debate with Colet more than a decade previously, wished to stress the humanity assumed by Christ, a humanity that reduced him in the suffering of the cross to the abject level of slavery.[409] Erasmus' response to Lefèvre would be reflected in the second edition by an enormous annotation in which the essential argument of the *Apology* would be reiterated in fifty-seven numbered

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404 Cf Ep 906: 490, 494 with 494n, 504–5. For Edward Lee see just below.

405 For Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples, eminent French humanist, see 'New Testament Scholarship' 84–5 with nn344, 347. For Erasmus' critique of Lefèvre's interpretation of Heb 2:7 see 'New Testament Scholarship' 72 with n295.

406 Lefèvre's excursus was a response to Erasmus' criticism of the reading of Heb 2:7 that Lefèvre had proposed in the first edition of his *Fourteen Epistles of Paul with Commentary* – the title is cited in ASD IX-3 65 as *S.Pauli epistolae* XIV *ex vulgata, adiecta intelligentia ex Graeco cum commentariis*, ie *The Fourteen Epistles of Saint Paul from the Vulgate, illuminated by reference to the Greek, with Commentary* (Paris: Henry Estienne 1512). The date of the second edition is not precisely determined, but sometime between November 1516 and July 1517, CWE 83 2.

407 Cf *Apologia ad Fabrum* CWE 83 2 and 4 n2 and Epp 597:37n, 906:203–4. Erasmus wrote the *Apologia* as a letter to Lefèvre dated at the end '5 August'; cf CWE 83 107.

408 For these charges see CWE 83 22–4, 33–4, 54–5; for charges of naivety and deception, CWE 83 73, 79 and Ep 608:27–8.

409 Cf CWE 83 37–8.

paragraphs.[410] The quarrel distressed Erasmus for the full extent of his first year in Louvain, a distress augmented by Lefèvre's unbroken silence. Though Erasmus claimed in late July 1518 – then in Basel for the printing of his second edition – that he was at peace with Lefèvre,[411] the two did not actually meet until 1526, thus giving a signal of friendship restored.[412]

Erasmus met Edward Lee, a young Englishman who had come to Louvain to learn Greek and Hebrew, shortly after he had arrived in Louvain in the summer of 1517. The relation between the two would extend over some years, in essentially three phases: (1) from their first acquaintance in 1517 to the publication of the second edition of Erasmus' New Testament in March 1519; (2) after the publication of the second edition to the formal peace the two made in July 1520, during which time hostilities led to mutually incriminating publications, of which those of Erasmus would in numerous cases provide argument – and in some cases text – for his third edition of the New Testament published in 1522; and (3) subsequent to 1526, when Erasmus suspected Lee, then in Spain, to have instigated the Spanish monks against him. His formal response to the monks, the *Apologia adversus monachos* (1528) was not without influence on the fifth edition of the New Testament, published in 1535. At this point, our concern is with the first phase, the relationship of the two men before the publication of the second edition of the New Testament.

If we follow Erasmus' perception, we will divide the first phase into two parts: the months from August 1517 to April 1518, just before Erasmus left for Basel to attend the printing of the second edition of the New Testament, during which he acknowledged Lee as a friendly if bothersome critic; and the period from the summer of 1518 and the months following, when he believed that Lee had turned hostile.[413] Erasmus and Lee had met shortly after both had arrived in Louvain in the summer of 1517; they soon developed a certain friendship. When the friendship had become 'intimate,'[414] Erasmus showed Lee the work in which he was engaged in preparing the second edition, a 'book with the margins full of notes and pages inserted everywhere.'[415] Lee began to make notes on Erasmus' annotations as they appeared in the first edition and to send them to Erasmus, who in turn, quite occasionally at least,

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410 Annotation on Heb 2:7 (*minuisti eum paulominus ab angelis*)
411 Cf Epp 855:52–65, 856:70–4.
412 Cf CEBR II 318.
413 Cf Ep 886:56–73 (postscript).
414 Cf *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 7.
415 *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 7

returned Lee's notes with his own hastily scribbled responses.[416] The notes from each man became somewhat acrimonious. In January Erasmus wrote to Lee that he could not use his notes;[417] Lee, for his part, stopped sending them, and the friendship cooled.

During the summer of 1518, while Erasmus was in Basel, Lee collected his notes along with Erasmus' responses – figures of two hundred and three hundred such notes are given[418] – had them copied several times, and sent the copies to a few selected monasteries and men of importance. When Erasmus returned from Basel and learned what Lee had done, he arranged to meet Lee but found him intractable; Lee had been offended because Erasmus had appeared contemptuous of him and his notes. Reluctant to publish the second edition without some knowledge of Lee's notes, he asked Lee to share his notes with him 'in a Christian spirit';[419] but Lee was adamant, and even with the application of dubious methods Erasmus managed to get only a couple pages.[420] The second edition of the New Testament was published without the advantage of Edward Lee's book of notes. Erasmus claimed in any case that few of Lee's notes were of any use to him. The claim, however, is suspect, for in his 'Response' to Lee Erasmus acknowledges specific notes that passed between the two men in the autumn of 1517,[421] while the notes acknowledged correspond on occasion to changes and additions made in the 1519 *Annotations*, inviting the inference of probable influence from Lee.[422]

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416 *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 24

417 Ep 765:2–3. The tone is friendly, though the letter is brief. Erasmus describes the cooling of the friendship in the *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 7–8.

418 *Cf Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 9 with n48. When Lee finally published his notes with Gilles de Gourmont in Paris (1520), he included 243 notes ostensibly based on the first edition, though Erasmus believed that the original notes of 1517 had been expanded in the manuscript copies of 1518, as well as in the published book of 1520.

419 *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 10

420 *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 13–14; 'dubious methods,' ie 'leaving no trick untried.'

421 There are numerous references to these notes in the *Responsio ad annotationes Lei*; cf eg CWE 72 96, 113–14, 126; Erasmus also suggests that Lee took advantage of informal personal conversations as well in constructing his notebook, CWE 72 203.

422 Erasmus occasionally acknowledges Lee's influence, eg CWE 72 98; in other cases, it is reasonable to infer influence: compare eg additions of *1519* to the annotation on Matt 16:20 (*quia ipse esset Iesus Christus*) with *Responsio ad annotationes*

Thus Erasmus' intense personal relationship with Lee and Lefèvre, his concern over his position with the faculty of theology at the University of Louvain, his very active support of the Collegium Trilingue, his duties as a royal councillor, his anxiety over the dispensation from the pope – all these together constituted the intricate and daunting framework within which he undertook to remake the first edition of his New Testament to become the second. At the same time, his persistent and wide-ranging literary efforts should not be forgotten. To be sure, some publications were conducive to his work on the second edition of the New Testament, certainly the *Paraphrase on Romans* on which he was engaged in the spring and autumn of 1517, as well as a new edition of the *Enchiridion*, whose long dedicatory letter to Paul Volz, dated 14 August 1518, anticipated some of the themes central in the *Ratio* composed later in the autumn of that year.[423] But Erasmus' humanist interests remained prominent during this time. Between June 1516 and August 1517 he translated and edited two books of Theodorus Gaza's Greek grammar, indicating clearly in the preface to the second volume its humanist pedagogical purpose: '… to lighten the labour of people who are keen to learn Greek, and … to use it as a bait to attract those who seemed to be deterred

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*Lei 1* (Note 10) CWE 72 102; to the annotation on John 3:3 (*et nasci denuo*) with ibidem (Note 83) CWE 72 195; and (also in *1519*) omissions from and additions to the annotation on John 8:25 (*principium qui et loquor*) with ibidem (Notes 92 and 93) CWE 72 201–15. On Lee as the 'awful snake' of Erasmus' prefatory 'Letter to the Reader 1535' see the Translator's Note to 'Errors in the Vulgate' 867–8.

423 For the dates of the revision and printing of the *Enchiridion* see Ep 858 introduction. The revision of the work was evidently rather light (cf CWE 66 4). I assume that the *Ratio*, as a revision of the *Methodus*, was composed in the autumn of 1518 and was among the 'prefaces and tail-pieces' that Erasmus promised to send to Froben shortly after he had sent 'the whole remaining text of the New Testament' along with the Arguments (Epp 885:2–4, 886:18–20, both letters dated 22 October 1518). The first lines of the *Ratio* imply recent composition. Allen's dating of the dedicatory letter for the separate edition of the *Ratio* (Ep 745) would seem to place its composition in 1517, but Allen's dating requires the hypothesis that Ep 745:38–46 (the references to Maximilian I) were added to the page proofs of Martens' 1518 edition (cf the introduction to Allen Ep 745). If this insertion is extended four lines farther to include the reference to the *Ratio*, we might conclude that a letter of 1517 to Albert of Brandenburg was later edited to become the dedicatory letter for the *Ratio* of 1518. As late as 1519 Albert was still asking about the book dedicated to him (Ep 923:7–9); he had received the book by 13 June of that year but was only then promising to send a gift in return (Ep 988:29–33).

by the difficulty of the language.'[424] In 1517 Erasmus prepared editions of Suetonius and Quintus Curtius, the former primarily in the spring when he was staying with Pieter Gillis, the latter in the autumn after he had arrived in Louvain.[425] The dedicatory letter to the Suetonius constituted a major essay on the importance of history. Moreover, in this period he apparently devoted much more time to the church Fathers, whose role in the humanist vision of theological studies had been signalled in the *Methodus* of 1516. He prepared an edition of an obscure text, *The Letter of Eucharius, bishop of Lyon, to Valerian*, published in 1517 in an edition of the *Disticha Catonis*.[426] More significant was his decision at this time to 'do for [Augustine] what [he] had done for Jerome.'[427] Negotiations with Froben to publish an edition of the *Opera* were in progress by May of 1517,[428] and a year later he claimed to be re-reading Augustine 'daily as often as the need arises.'[429] The vastly increased scope of citations from Augustine in the second edition of the *Annotations* attests that Erasmus' claim, if overstated, is substantially true.

**A Timeline**

A brief comment in the preface to the first edition of the annotations on Mark indicates that Erasmus was planning a second edition of his New Testament even before he had completed the first,[430] and later recollections also say as much. In writing to Edward Lee in 1520 he claims to have 'already promised' in his first edition to revise the New Testament.[431] A few months after the publication of the *Novum instrumentum* in March, Erasmus confided to William Latimer and then again to Guillaume Budé that he would soon be

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424 Ep 771:6–8. The first book was published in July 1516 (Ep 428 introduction), the second in March 1518 (Ep 771 introduction); cf also Ep 575:7–8.

425 For the Suetonius published in June 1518 see Ep 586:63–70 and Ep 648; for the Quintus Curtius, also published in June 1518, see Epp 633:4–8, 704 with introduction, 844:319–21, and 'New Testament Scholarship' n362.

426 Cf Ep 676 introduction.

427 Ep 844:276 (15 May 1518)

428 Cf Ep 581:22–3.

429 Ep 844:206

430 Cf ASD VI-5 352:44–6: 'In fact, if in the future I have the leisure, I shall not be reluctant to gather together other material that could enrich and correct the work and to add it for common use.'

431 Cf *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 5 with n14 (although according to n14 the promise of a second edition is located in the *Apologia* that prefaced the first edition of the New Testament). Cf also *Apologia ad Fabrum* CWE 83 9.

preparing a new edition, though he requested that his intention be kept secret so that Froben could sell the first edition.[432] The summer months of 1516 were somewhat unsettled for Erasmus and included a brief visit to England in August;[433] but he tells us that when he returned to Antwerp he made 'a first beginning' in the preparation of the second edition.[434] After a month in Antwerp, he moved to Brussels to be near the court.[435] In Brussels he took advantage of the skills of Cuthbert Tunstall, English ambassador at the court, to collate the texts.[436] It was apparently at this point that Erasmus' preparation of a second edition of his New Testament began to become common knowledge 'rather to his regret.'[437]

When Tunstall left Brussels briefly in January 1517 to meet with the emperor, Erasmus complained of loneliness – 'to sit here [in Brussels] any longer I simply have no spirits'[438] – and once more begged from Pieter Gillis in Antwerp a room 'which has a privy.'[439] Possibly it was not so much loneliness as a copy of Suetonius that Gillis had just obtained that enticed Erasmus back to Antwerp, an edition of which he would prepare that year.[440] In any case, the months that followed were stressful for Erasmus, and there is little evidence that he worked much in the spring on the New Testament. During June and early July 1517 he was once more following the court, first to Ghent, then to Bruges. With Tunstall at hand he was again able to turn to the collation of manuscripts, and, in fact, 'finished the collations for the New Testament.'[441] In his *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* Erasmus is effusive in recognizing his debt to Tunstall in preparing the second edition. Referring to the weeks at Ghent and Bruges, he says: 'Cuthbert Tunstall supplied me with one rather

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432 Cf Epp 417:7–10 (Latimer) and 421:76–80 (Budé), both letters dated June 1516.
433 For a sketch of Erasmus' movements in this period see 'New Testament Scholarship' 85–6; cf also Ep 470 introduction.
434 *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 5
435 At the request of the chancellor, Jean Le Sauvage; cf *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 5–6.
436 Cf *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 6; also Epp 597:19–20 and 475:16, where Erasmus, just arrived in Brussels, says, 'I see [Tunstall] constantly.'
437 *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 6
438 Ep 516:8–9; for Tunstall's meeting with the emperor see Ep 515:9n.
439 Ep 516:10
440 Gillis told Erasmus of his Suetonius in a letter dated 18 January 1517 (Ep 515:11–14); Erasmus hastily replied (Ep 516) two days later. Cf n425 above.
441 Ep 597:18–20

neat text[442] and gave me his most friendly and faithful help in collating the Greek manuscripts, a task one person cannot do on his own. And he gave me advice on several points.'[443]

Charles left Bruges in early July 1517 for Spain, where he had recently been declared king, and Erasmus moved to Louvain.[444] If he was at first distracted by Lefèvre's attack on him,[445] by September he was once more engrossed in the preparation of his second edition. Since he had already claimed that the collation of texts was finished, it is probable that during the autumn and winter of 1517 he devoted his attention primarily to annotation, and perhaps translation, an inference supported by his communications at this time with Edward Lee on the notes. In any case, his letters attest his industry and indicate his progress. On 7 September he wrote to Silvestro Gigli[446] that he 'had the New Testament in hand once more';[447] two days later in a letter to Cardinal Wolsey he claimed to be 'at present … the slave of the New Testament so completely that I can do nothing else.' He added that he would devote the winter to this task, remaining in Louvain.[448] On 5 October he complained that his devotion to the New Testament had 'almost deprived [him] of [his] eyesight and vital force.'[449] A month later he estimated that he would finish 'within four months' or 'in three months' – 'with God's help'[450] – and he called attention to the radical nature of the revision: 'The New Testament … is now being taken to pieces and refashioned so thoroughly that it will be a new book.'[451] On 6 December he reported that he had 'finished a great

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442 Perhaps a manuscript Tunstall might have found at Tournai, where he had met the emperor in January. Cf Ep 586:63–6, where a Suetonius manuscript from Tournai is mentioned.

443 *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 6

444 It was apparently Charles' wish that he should do so (cf *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 5 and Ep 1225:30 with n8), but there were also other considerations, as we have seen, that enticed him.

445 Cf 99–100 above.

446 Bishop of Worcester and English agent in Rome; for the bishop's role in obtaining a dispensation for Erasmus earlier in 1517 see 'New Testament Scholarship' 85–6; cf also 170.

447 Ep 649:10

448 Ep 658:39–41, 44–5

449 Ep 682:5–6

450 Both estimates were made on the same day, 2 November; cf Epp 694:21 and 695:23.

451 Ep 694:18–21

part of [his] New Testament.'[452] Early in the new year of 1518 he was 'in sight of harbour in the distance,' and he was therefore considering a publisher – either Froben in Basel or Aldo Manuzio in Venice, and a consequent trip to either Switzerland or Italy 'after Easter.'[453] In March the work was reaching a conclusion, if a somewhat tenuous one: on two successive days he could say, on the one hand, that 'the revision is now finished' and, on the other, that the 'New Testament needs so much work that I have no time to be ill ...'[454]

Erasmus intended to be at the press for the production of his revision; he had, he said, worked hard on the revision and added, '… it remains to take equal care in the printing. This is a complicated business and cannot be completed unless I am there in person to watch over it.'[455] By 17 April he had chosen Froben as his publisher[456] and could promise Gerard Geldenhouwer that he would be back in Louvain by October.[457] He left Louvain for Basel about 1 May 1518.[458] He carried with him, we must surmise, his working copy of the first edition of his New Testament, now with his marginal notes and pages inserted everywhere.[459] He tells us that he carried a single page of the notes of his critic, Edward Lee, a page consisting of Lee's comments on the genealogy of Christ in the *Novum instrumentum*.[460] He evidently took with him a copy, borrowed from Pieter Gillis in Antwerp, of a commentary on the New Testament attributed to Athanasius and translated into Latin by Porsena; the commentary's real author, he would discover in Basel, was Theophylact, whose Greek text he had used in the 1516 edition.[461] Probably he also conveyed two manuscripts he had borrowed from the Augustinian monks of Corsendonck, one Latin, one Greek. The Greek manuscript had a frontispiece with an illustration of the Holy Trinity and a table in Greek

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452 Ep 731:42–3
453 Ep 752:7–10. Erasmus eventually chose Froben in Basel; for the considerations involved in his decision see Ep 770 introduction.
454 Epp 788:4, 793:35
455 Ep 793:35–7
456 Cf Ep 813:7–8.
457 Cf Ep 812:33–4.
458 Cf Ep 843 introduction.
459 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 28 with n147 above.
460 Cf *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 8 and *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* (Notes 35–44) CWE 72 139–53; also Epp 784:51–8, 886:75–9.
461 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 132 with n554. For the loan see Ep 846:9–11; and for the discovery and its implications for Erasmus' biblical scholarship see Ep 846:9n and CWE 56 15 n25.

explaining the relation between the One and the Three, and this was followed on the next page by the Greek text of the Nicene Creed. The frontispiece was adapted for the second edition and was severely criticized.[462] Finally, he carried a pamphlet he had been sent that he was able to read en route. It offered a bitter and sustained criticism of his New Testament enterprise, putting into sharp focus the question of authorization and the temerity displayed in dedicating the first edition to Pope Leo X.[463] It was a pamphlet 'so illiterate that [he] could hardly endure to read it, so comical that [he] could not fail to.'[464]

Erasmus arrived in Basel on 13 May but became sick within ten days.[465] The disease lingered for much of the summer, sapped his strength, and, he believed, delayed the completion of the new edition. [466] This second edition could not, in any case, be finished quickly: the annotations had been vastly expanded, as the prefaces also would be. Printing had begun before the end of May,[467] but when Erasmus, in fear of the plague, left Basel for Louvain on 3 September, only the *Annotations* had been completed.[468] He took with him the text of the New Testament – or parts of it – which he continued to revise, revising, indeed, even as he made his way back to Louvain.[469] Unfortunately he became very sick en route and, after he had arrived in Louvain, spent four weeks recovering at the house of Dirk Martens, the printer, and even after another two weeks he was 'still in the surgeon's hands.'[470] In spite of sickness, he 'went back to work without delay and finished the missing parts of the New Testament' – evidently at Martens' house.[471] It was during this illness that he also composed his own Arguments for the Epistles to replace

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462 Cf *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 42–3 with n211; also 'New Testament Scholarship' 121 and 139–40. The page was omitted from subsequent editions. On the Corsendonck manuscripts see Ep 373:31n ('Prefaces and Letters' 783 with n6).
463 Cf Ep 843:488–569.
464 Cf Ep 843:14–15.
465 Cf Epp 847:2 with 2n, 4–8 and 843 introduction.
466 Cf Epp 855:20–3, 847:7–10 with 7n, 860:7–15.
467 Cf Ep 847:3–4.
468 Cf Ep 860:12–13. The last annotation on the book of Revelation is followed by the date 23 August 1518, but a subject index was yet to be added to this volume, so that the date of the colophon for the second volume, as for the first, is March 1519.
469 Cf Ep 867:81–3.
470 Epp 867:266–8 and 889:29 (23 October 1518)
471 Ep 867:252–4

the traditional Arguments used in the first edition.[472] On 22 October he was able to send to Froben 'the whole remaining text of the New Testament and the Arguments,' and promised 'soon' to 'send the rest; that is the prefaces and appendices.'[473] The prefaces included much new material: the *Ratio*, prepared as a revised and greatly enlarged version of the *Methodus*, and, in addition, many pages devoted to the defence of his project, going far beyond the *Apologia* of *1516*. It has been conjectured that he would have completed these by early November.[474] Publication followed in March 1519. If, as Erasmus asserted, revision began in Antwerp in September 1516, the preparation and publication of the second edition spanned two and a half years, while Erasmus gave more or less continuous attention to the task from September 1517 to November 1518.

## The New Testament of 1519

### *A Handsome Two-Volume Set*

When Erasmus wrote to Willibald Pirckheimer that his *Novum instrumentum* 'was being taken to pieces and refashioned so thoroughly that it will be a new book,'[475] he was by no means exaggerating. The single volume of 1516 became in the edition of 1519 a two-volume set with a new title, the *Novum Testamentum*. The two volumes were required to accommodate in the first volume prefatory material that went far beyond that of the first edition, and in the second volume the greatly expanded annotations, as well as a very extensive subject index. It was a lavish set, enhanced by its use of woodcuts. The title page was framed by a border with an elaborate woodcut reflecting a critical view of court life; on the next page Pope Leo X's letter of approval was framed within a border that included a pictorial illustration of the ancient victory of the Germans over the Romans and allusions to the vices, especially the vice of slander.[476] For the biblical text, nonnarrative marginal

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472 Ep 894:34–6; he had composed the Argument of Romans earlier for his *Paraphrase* on that Epistle. For the Arguments written at this time see further 109–12 just below.

473 Ep 885:2–4, 25–6

474 Cf Ep 885:4n.

475 Cf Ep 694:105 and n451 above.

476 Although Erasmus was persistently critical of court life, and the victory of the Germans over the Romans might be read as a parable of humanist competition between north and south, one must be cautious in attributing moral intentionality

frames decorated the first page of what was set out for the reader as the major divisions or separable parts of the New Testament, providing for the reader a perspective from which the parts of the Bible could be seen in relation to each other. Thus each of the Gospels had a border surrounding its first page, likewise Acts, but the Pauline Epistles were taken as a group with a border surrounding the first page of Romans only, and similarly the Catholic Epistles (the first page of James receiving the border), while Revelation was viewed as distinct from the rest with its own first-page frame.[477]

New material accompanied the Greek and Latin texts. The 1519 edition prefaced the text of each Gospel with a Greek 'Life' of the evangelist attributed to Sophronius.[478] These 'Lives' were followed immediately by a Greek hypothesis (a page or less) from Theophylact, though the preface to Matthew offered a slightly more elaborate *prooimion* (preamble) that included a hypothesis. The text of Acts was preceded by a Greek *apodemia* (travelogue, two pages), tracing briefly the travels of the apostle Paul. Each of the Epistles was preceded by both a hypothesis in Greek (a full page for Romans, otherwise a half page or less) and a Latin Argument composed by Erasmus in the autumn of 1518, replacing the old Vulgate Arguments of the 1516 edition. These prefaces to the individual books of the New Testament would appear in the three subsequent editions. The first volume concluded with the letter of Froben 'To the Reader,' new in 1519,[479] a half page of errata, an index of the gatherings, and publisher, place, and date of publication, the last three items all on one page.

Erasmus' Arguments for the Epistles deserve a brief notice. Argument translates the Latin *argumentum*, which was generally used to designate a

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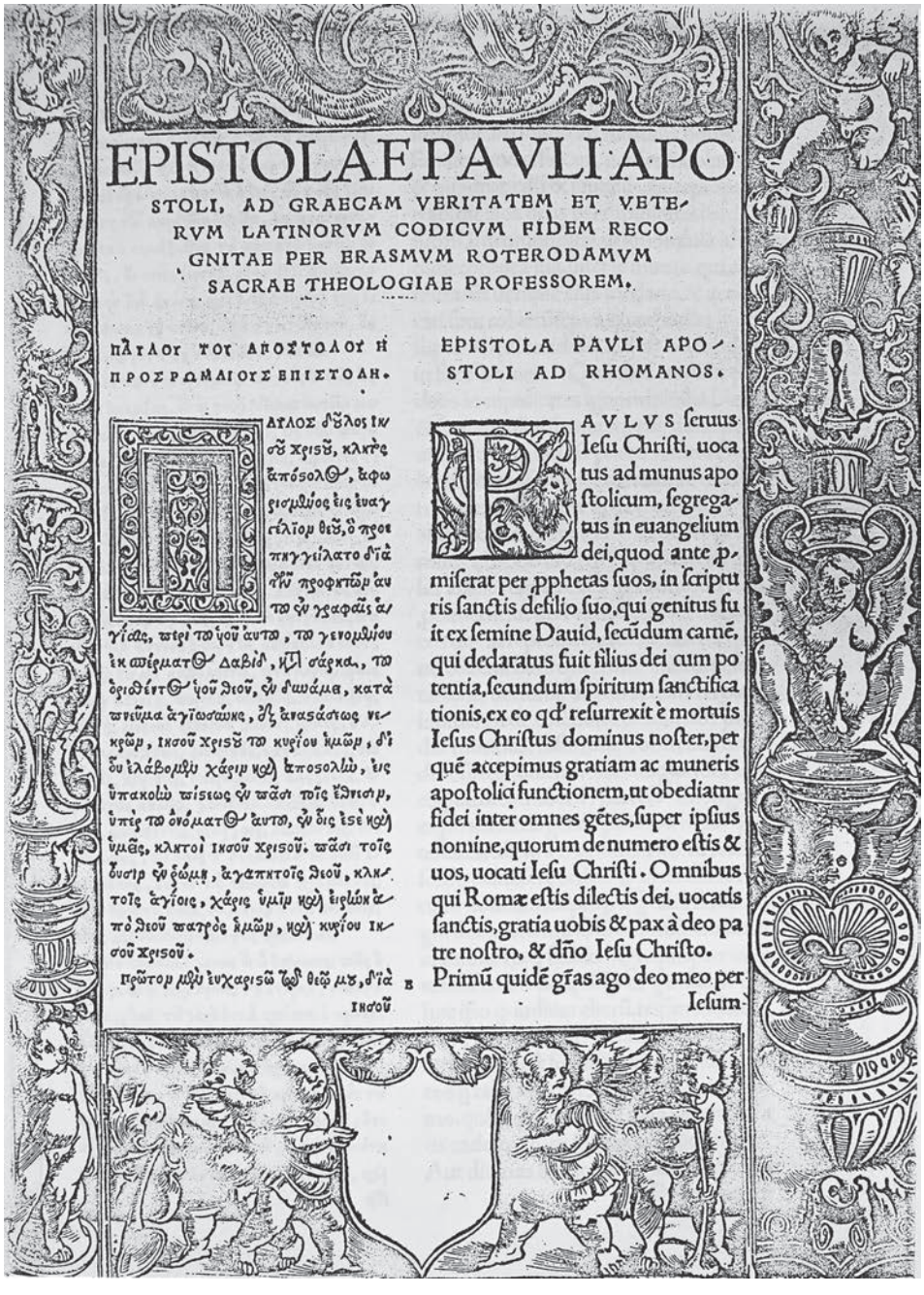
to the frames. For the title page to the 1519 edition see 'Title Pages' 747. For the letter of Leo see 'Prefaces and Letters' 772–3; for illustrations, 746 (*1519* title page) and xv (Leo's Letter). For the ethical significance of borders see Translator's Note to 'Title Pages' 741 with n5.

477 The first page of Romans, which has a surrounding border, is illustrated on 110; the first page of 1 Corinthians, with merely a bar dividing it from Romans, is illustrated on 111.

478 The attribution is evidently to the seventh-century patriarch of Jerusalem; cf Bruce Metzger *The Text of the New Testament: Transmission, Corruption and Restoration* 4th ed, with Bart Ehrman (New York 2005) 39–40. These 'Lives' appear to be a Greek translation of the brief biographies Jerome composed in his *De viris illustribus*; since Jerome's 'Lives' were printed in the prefatory material of the 1519 edition, preceding the chapter index for each evangelist's Gospel, Sophronius' Greek translation in the text matched Jerome's Latin 'Lives' in the preface; cf 122 with n530 just below.

479 Cf 'Prefaces and Letters' 777–9.



EPISTOLAE PAVLI APO
STOLI, AD GRAECAM VERITATEM ET VETE-
RVM LATINORVM CODICVM FIDEM RECO
GNITAE PER ERASMVM ROTERODAMVM
SACRAE THEOLOGIAE PROFESSOREM.

ΠΑΥΛΟΥ ΤΟΥ ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΟΥ Η ΠΡΟΣ ΡΩΜΑΙΟΥΣ ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ.

ΠΑΥΛΟΣ δοῦλος ἰησοῦ χρισοῦ, κλητὸς ἀπόστολος, ἀφωρισμένος εἰς εὐαγγέλιον θεοῦ, ὃ προεπηγγείλατο διὰ τῶν προφητῶν αὐτοῦ ἐν γραφαῖς ἁγίαις, περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, τοῦ γενομένου ἐκ σπέρματος Δαβὶδ κατὰ σάρκα, τοῦ ὁρισθέντος υἱοῦ θεοῦ ἐν δυνάμει, κατὰ πνεῦμα ἁγιωσύνης, ἐξ ἀναστάσεως νεκρῶν, ἰησοῦ χρισοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν, δι' οὗ ἐλάβομεν χάριν καὶ ἀποστολήν, εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὀνόματος αὐτοῦ, ἐν οἷς ἐστὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς, κλητοὶ ἰησοῦ χρισοῦ. πᾶσι τοῖς οὖσιν ἐν ῥώμῃ, ἀγαπητοῖς θεοῦ, κλητοῖς ἁγίοις, χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν, καὶ κυρίου ἰησοῦ χρισοῦ.

πρῶτον μὲν εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου, διὰ ἰησοῦ

EPISTOLA PAVLI APOSTOLI AD RHOMANOS.

PAVLVS seruus Iesu Christi, uocatus ad munus apostolicum, segregatus in euangelium dei, quod ante promiserat per pphetas suos, in scripturis sanctis de filio suo, qui genitus fuit ex semine Dauid, secūdum carnē, qui declaratus fuit filius dei cum potentia, secundum spiritum sanctificationis, ex eo qđ resurrexit è mortuis Iesus Christus dominus noster, per quē accepimus gratiam ac muneris apostolici functionem, ut obediatur fidei inter omnes gētes, super ipsius nomine, quorum de numero estis & uos, uocati Iesu Christi. Omnibus qui Romæ estis dilectis dei, uocatis sanctis, gratia uobis & pax à deo patre nostro, & dño Iesu Christo.

Primū quidē gratias ago deo meo per Iesum

B

*Novum Testamentum* 1519,
Epistle of Paul to the Romans, first page with full border

ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΥΣ ΚΟΡΙΝΘΙ/
ΟΥΣ ΠΡΩΤΗ.

ΠΑΥΛΟΣ κλητὸς ἀπόστολος ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ, καὶ σωσθένης ὁ ἀδελφός, τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ, τῇ οὔσῃ ἐν κορίνθῳ, ἡγιασμένοις ἐν χριστῷ ἰησοῦ, κλητοῖς ἁγίοις, σὺν πᾶσι τοῖς ἐπικαλουμένοις τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ, ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ, αὐτῶν τε καὶ ἡμῶν. χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν, καὶ κυρίου ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ. εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν, ἐπὶ τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ, τῇ δοθείσῃ ὑμῖν ἐν χριστῷ ἰησοῦ, ὅτι ἐν παντὶ ἐπλουτίσθητε ἐν αὐτῷ, ἐν παντὶ λόγῳ, καὶ πάσῃ γνώσει, καθὼς τὸ μαρτύριον τοῦ χριστοῦ ἐβεβαιώθη ἐν ὑμῖν, ὥστε ὑμᾶς μὴ ὑστερεῖσθαι ἐν μηδενὶ χαρίσματι, ἀπεκδεχομένους τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ, ὃς καὶ βεβαιώσει ὑμᾶς ἕως τέλους, ἀνεγκλήτους, ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ. πιστὸς ὁ θεός, δι' οὗ ἐκλήθητε εἰς κοινωνίαν τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν.

β παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς ἀδελφοί, διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ, ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες, καὶ μὴ ᾖ ἐν ὑμῖν σχίσματα, ἦτε δὲ κατηρτισμένοι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοΐ, καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ.

γ ἐδηλώθη γάρ μοι περὶ ὑμῶν ἀδελφοί μου, ὑπὸ τῶν χλόης, ὅτι ἔριδες ἐν ὑμῖν εἰσὶ

EPISTOLA PAVLI AD CORINTHIOS PRIMA.

PAulus uocatus apoſtolus Ieſu Chriſti, per uoluntatē dei, & Soſthenes frater, eccleſiæ dei, quæ eſt Corinthi, ſanctificatis per Chriſtum Ieſum, uocatis ſanctis, unà cum omnibus qui inuocant nomen domini noſtri Ieſu Chriſti in quouis loco, uel ſuo, uel noſtro. Gratia uobis & pax à deo patre noſtro, & domino Ieſu Chriſto. Gratias ago deo meo ſemper pro uobis, de gratia dei, quæ data eſt uobis per Chriſtum Ieſum, quod in omnibus ditati eſtis per ipſum, in omni ſermone, & omni cognitione (quibus rebus teſtimonium Ieſu Chriſti confirmatum fuit in uobis) adeo, ut non deſtituamini in ullo dono, expectantes reuelationem domini noſtri Ieſu Chriſti, qui & confirmabit uos uſque ad finem, inculpatos, in die domini noſtri Ieſu Chriſti. Fidelis deus, per quem uocati eſtis in conſortium filij ipſius Ieſu Chriſti domini noſtri.

Obſecro autem uos fratres, per nomen domini noſtri Ieſu Chriſti, ut idem loquamini omnes, & non ſint inter uos diſſidia, ſed ſitis integrum corpus eadem mente, & eadem ſententia.

Significatum eſt enim mihi de uobis fratres mei, à familiaribus Chloæ, quod contentiones ſint inter uos.



*Novum Testamentum* 1519,
First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, first page

subject or theme on the one hand, or proof or evidence on the other.[480] In his annotations Erasmus accepts the Latin word as a translation of the Greek *τεκμήριον* 'a convincing sign,' *περιοχή* 'passage of Scripture' or 'contents of a scriptural passage' (VG *locus*), *ἔλεγχος* 'evidence,' and he identifies the contents of the *ῥῆμα* 'rumour' in Acts 10:37 as an *argumentum*. On the title page of the 1519 edition Erasmus spoke of the Arguments as a 'summary of the contents of each Epistle.'[481]

Erasmus had composed the first Argument for the Epistles in 1517 for his *Paraphrase on Romans*; this Argument was virtually a full-scale critical introduction to the Epistle, extending far beyond a mere summary of contents. It was only in the very latest stage of the preparation of the second edition, when he was preparing the last materials to send to Basel, that he wrote the Arguments for the remaining Epistles, doing so, indeed, while he was sick.[482] Their respective lengths suggest that he realized that time was running out even as he wrote: the Argument for 1 Corinthians extended to three full pages, the Arguments for 2 Corinthians and Galatians each required a page and a half; thereafter none was more than a half page in length, and in fact the Argument for James was less than three lines in length. Erasmus actually offered these Arguments both as a separate publication with a dedication to Nicolas de Malaise and together with the *Ratio*, both in November 1518.[483]

The second volume, the *Annotations*, began with a title page followed by the *1516* preface 'To the Reader.' Only the first page of annotations, beginning with those on Matthew, was surrounded by a border; the other books with their annotations were separated merely by a figured horizontal bar. When several annotations were placed within a single paragraph, they were readily distinguishable from one another by a generous blank space in the line and a single parenthesis following the cue phrase. The annotations extended to 548 pages, excluding Erasmus' preface 'To the Reader,'[484] and were followed by the subject index of fifty-two columns closely linked to the

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480 Cf the definition in CWE 48 70 n3.

481 For the annotations see respectively those on Acts 1:3 (*in multis argumentis*), Acts 8:32 (*locus autem scripturae*), Heb 11:1 (*argumentum*), and Acts 10:37 (*incipiens enim*); cf also 'Title Page of the *Novum Testamentum* 1519' 747 with n2.

482 Cf Ep 889:40–1. For the Argument of Romans see 'New Testament Scholarship' 93.

483 Cf Epp 894 introduction and 745 introduction. For the short Vulgate Arguments of the edition of 1516 see 'New Testament Scholarship' 33 with n173.

484 The 'Preface to the Reader' printed in *1516* was printed again in *1519* and subsequent editions; cf 'Prefaces and Letters' 782–93; for changes and additions in *1519* see nn2, 10, 13, 15, and 34.

marginalia of the *Annotations* text. The letter of Oecolampadius, printed in the first edition, came next,[485] then less than a page of errata, an index of the gatherings, and the colophon

*Volume I: The Introductory Prefaces*

As we have seen, Erasmus introduced the first edition of his New Testament with a few relatively brief prefaces that explained and justified his undertaking, all completed within twenty-eight pages. In contrast, the introduction to the second edition extended over 118 pages. This elaborate introduction is divided into two major parts: the narrative prefaces (pages 1–97) and aids for the use of the text (pages 98–118).

### 1/ THE NARRATIVE PREFACES: THE PAPAL LETTER

In the 1519 edition the dedicatory letter to Pope Leo, the *Paraclesis*, and the *Apologia* were taken over from the first edition virtually unchanged.[486] Small but significant changes and additions were made in the title page, including the change in the title of the work itself from *instrumentum* to *Testamentum*.[487] However, the brief letter from Leo was new and extremely important to Erasmus. He had been severely criticized because his first edition had not received papal 'authorization.'[488] It was therefore with increasing urgency that during the summer of 1518, when he was in Basel, he sought to gain specific approval from the pope for his new edition. Late in the summer he wrote to Antonio Pucci, papal delegate to Switzerland, who had recently visited him in Basel, to 'secure what I need [that is, papal approval] with a couple words.'[489] To the same end, he had evidently sought also the help of Cardinals Riario and Grimani, who he had supposed were in Rome, and of Paolo Bombace.[490] Neither cardinal was in Rome, and in the end it was Paolo Bombace, well placed as secretary to Cardinal Lorenzo Pucci (Antonio's uncle) and resident

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485 The *1516* letter of Oecolampadius 'To the Reader'(cf 31 with n167) was printed in *1519* without changes or additions.

486 The minor changes are indicated in the footnotes to the translation of these pieces in this volume; for the letter to Leo see 'Prefaces and Letters' 767–72; for *Paraclesis*, 404–22; for *Apologia*, 456–77.

487 The term *instrumentum* proved to be problematic. Cf *Methodus* 430 with n28 and 'Title Page of the *Novum instrumentum* 1516' 743 with n1.

488 Most notably in the pamphlet given to him just before leaving for Basel; cf Ep 843:348–58, 488–94.

489 Ep 860:81, and for the full request 26–9, 54–90 (26 August 1518).

490 Cf Ep 864 introduction.

in the papal palace at the Vatican, who managed to secure the brief through the cardinal.[491] Fortuitous events delayed the papal letter, and Bombace was unable to send it from Rome until 1 October;[492] in little more than a month Erasmus would send to Froben the final copy for the second edition!

**2/** THE NARRATIVE PREFACES: THE RATIO VERAE THEOLOGIAE

In *1519* the *Methodus* of the first edition was replaced with the *Ratio verae theologiae*. The *Ratio* did indeed have as its base the *Methodus*, absorbing much of the latter's content in its first and last pages. Even here, however, in those pages where the *Ratio* copied extensively from the *Methodus*, the *Ratio* added comments that sharpened noticeably the attack on scholasticism and the scholastic theologians, symbolically represented by the octogenarian who 'chatters away endlessly' with a 'taste for nothing but sophisms.'[493] Further, the advocacy of the liberal arts that was evident in the *Methodus* found new and winsome support in the *Ratio* from the striking tributes to three benefactors of language instruction, the recently deceased Jérôme de Busleyden, his brother Gilles, and Etienne Poncher, then bishop of Paris.[494] With this advocacy came a more explicit insistence on the liberal arts as the key to unlocking the power of Scripture to engage and move the reader, a point effectively illustrated by a lengthy rhetorical analysis of the story of Abraham and Isaac. Would anyone see the beauty of this story, Erasmus asks, if 'he had never applied himself to the more refined literature?'[495] To a great extent, however, it was the vast expansion of the short central section of the *Methodus*, which had been essentially a brief essay propaedeutic to the study of the Bible, that transformed that work into the *Ratio*, a major pedagogical textbook marked by its sensitivity to biblical hermeneutics.[496]

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491 Cf CEBR III 123.

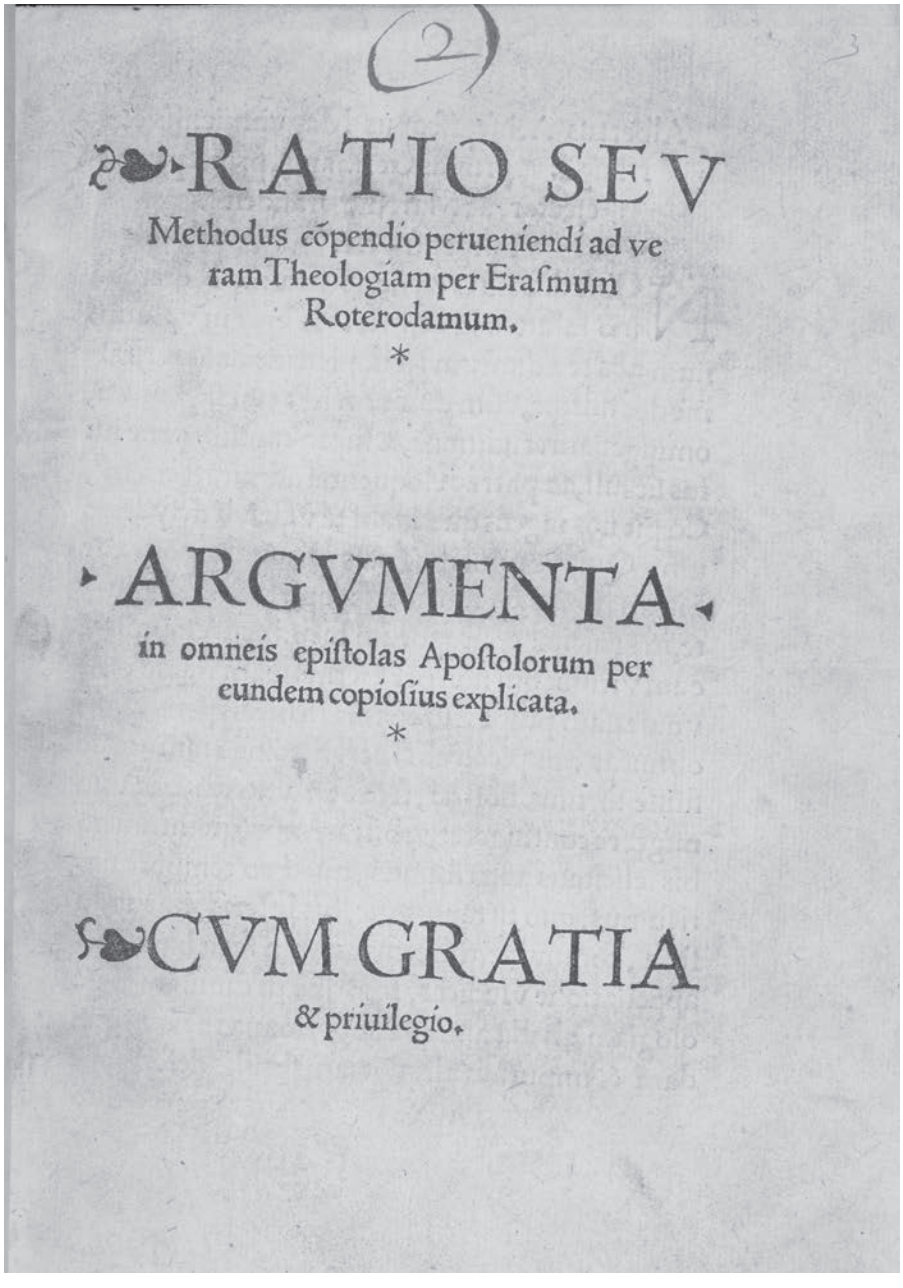
492 For Bombace's role and the delays see Ep 865. Leo's letter (Ep 864) is dated 10 September, at Rome. The letter is printed in 'Prefaces and Letters' 772–3.

493 Cf *Ratio* 516 and 711. Thus the text features the scholastic theologian in both the introductory and concluding pages.

494 Cf *Ratio* 496–7 with nn40, 43.

495 Cf *Ratio* 509.

496 The *Ratio* reflects a remarkable growth from its origin in the *Methodus* to the edition of 1523, the final edition authorized by Erasmus (for evidence of the 1523 edition see Epp 1341A:789, 1346 introduction, and 1365 introduction). The *Ratio* of 1519 incorporated approximately 90 per cent of the text of the *Methodus* – almost entirely at beginning and end (cf *Ratio* 489 with n4). To the



(2)

RATIO SEV

Methodus cõpendio perueniendi ad ve
ram Theologiam per Eraſmum
Roterodamum.

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ARGVMENTA

in omneis epiſtolas Apoſtolorum per
eundem copioſius explicata.

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CVM GRATIA

& priuilegio.

The *Ratio* with Erasmus' Arguments to the Epistles, Dirk Martens 1518, quarto, title page
Bodleian Library, University of Oxford

In the 1516 *Novum instrumentum* the *Methodus* extends to just nine pages; of these one and a half pages, approximately in the middle, appear to address somewhat obscurely hermeneutical concerns.[497] In this brief section we find first an outline of the 'doctrines' of Christ, that is, the 'teachings' of Christ, then a brief narrative of the 'whole course and circle of Christ's life,' and finally an admonition against 'twisting' the Scriptures. This last is, evidently enough, hermeneutical in intent, the first two less obviously so: the essential doctrines of Christ provide *certi scopi* 'clearly defined target points' with which to set in line 'the rest' – presumably our reading of all Scripture – while the 'course and circle of Christ's life' offer material on which to 'philosophize' in the 'teaching of godliness.' Precisely what 'philosophizing' means is here left unclear.[498]

These one and a half pages in the 1516 *Methodus* were expanded in Froben's 1519 *Ratio* to thirty-five pages,[499] and the hermeneutical intent is much clearer. Erasmus adds to the 'doctrines of Christ' to give a manifestly idealistic portrait of primitive Christianity. The idealism invites the question of interpretation: how are we to understand such idealistic doctrines? This leads Erasmus into the two famous images of the 'time periods' and the 'concentric circles.' Both images allow for hermeneutical 'accommodation': the time periods suggest that we must apply the teachings in different ways in different periods. The circles place Christ – ideal Christianity – in the centre as the target point at which all must aim, but accommodation is necessary; clergy and rulers cannot always insist on the ideal. Accommodation presupposes interpretation.

The narrative of the *Ratio* moves on, as in the *Methodus*, to consider the 'wonderful circle and harmony of the entire drama of Christ.'[500] The elabo-

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transformative edition of the 1519 *Ratio* subsequent additions were made, the largest in *1520*, but substantial further additions in *1522* and *1523*. The narrative that follows here attempts to identify the essential character of these additions.

497 In the 1516 text bbb3 verso–bbb4 recto; in Holborn 156:14–158:33; in the translation below 440–6.

498 Greater clarity comes in *1519*; cf nn509, 510 just below.

499 Pages 22–58 in the 1519 Froben text; as the later additions (*1520, 1522, 1523*) are included in the text of Holborn, the definition of the pages of the *Ratio* corresponding to the brief central section of the *Methodus* is obscured; but with the later additions this large hermeneutical section extends for nearly one hundred pages in Holborn (193:24–291:12); cf the translation below 516–690.

500 Cf *Ratio* 546 with n286.

rate review of the various incidents in and facets of Christ's life forces to some degree a historical reading of the Gospels, since Christ in his protean variety[501] emerges as a figure of human interest, a man with sometimes inexplicable foibles – contradictions that challenge the interpreter of Scripture to 'look for a way to resolve the problem.'[502] Erasmus' view of saving-history as it appears in the narrative here further encourages a historical reading of the biblical texts. 'The careful investigation of the divine plan'[503] requires that we reflect on the reversed roles of Jew and gentile, at the centre of which Erasmus places the question of faith: why did the Jews not have faith when it should have been possible for them to conjecture from prophetic predictions, abundant witnesses, and the evidence of his miracles who Christ was?[504] The practice of hermeneutics also assumes the application of the historical texts to the present, and at two points in particular Erasmus addresses the present. First, the biblical texts show the kind of preparation necessary for the effective preacher,[505] a subject that offers an occasion to discuss at length the major vices that beset clergy. Second, it is in the Scriptures that we must 'track down … the example and pattern for the actions of our lives.'[506] That pattern assumes the twin theological virtues of faith and charity. Faith is extravagantly extolled: 'So great a thing is faith that any vice that corrupts the character of Christians usually arises from weakness in or want of faith.'[507] Notably, the discussion of charity gives way to a severe critique of ceremonies: 'Go through the whole New Testament: nowhere will you find any precept relating to ceremonies.'[508] At length Erasmus returns to a narrative rapidly surveying events in the life of Christ recorded in Scripture, interpreting each event to apply to the life of Christians and the church, and this, he indicates, is 'to philosophize': 'It is in this way that it will be appropriate to philosophize over individual passages in the mystic volumes,

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501 For Christ as Proteus see *Ratio* 557 with n351.
502 Cf *Ratio* 557–9 with n352.
503 *Ratio* 561
504 See 'New Testament Scholarship' 94–5 with n382 on 'faith' in the *Paraphrase on Romans*.
505 Cf *Ratio* 578.
506 *Ratio* 594–5
507 *Ratio* 597
508 *Ratio* 599

especially in the Gospels ...'[509] The hermeneutical puzzle of the *Methodus* has been resolved.[510]

Erasmus now undertakes to deepen the foundation of a humanist hermeneutic, a reading of Scripture that begins in the 'domain of the grammarian and the rhetorician,' in a consideration of the significance of 'figures of speech and figures of thought' for the biblical interpreter. He notes that Divine Scripture appears to have engaged a 'mode of expression … effectively persuasive … accessible to learned and unlearned alike … effectual … for stirring the emotions, for alluring with its charm.'[511] This may not be without challenges for the interpreter: the delight derived from images in parables and allegories may be tarnished with perplexity when the images become in effect riddles, bringing obscurity to the sacred text. Hyperbole and irony, figures that greatly enhance our enjoyment of literature, must be exonerated from the charge of deceit when found in Scripture, while ambiguity, so prevalent in biblical literature, will frequently tease the interpreter. Perhaps not surprisingly Erasmus exemplifies the latter by citing expressions for faith, once again anticipating the definition of faith in the *1527* annotation on Romans 1:17.[512] Finally, he warns against the misuse of Scripture by forcing upon it a sense foreign to it, that is, 'twisting Scripture,' and he refers again to the interpreter's obligation: '… the sense we elicit from obscure words should conform to that circle of Christian teaching, should conform to the life of Christ, finally, should conform to natural justice.'[513]

The expansion of the *1516 Methodus* into the *1519 Ratio* enabled the latter to serve effectively as a preface to the enlarged edition of the New Testament of 1519, particularly with the *Annotations* in view. The new emphases in the *Ratio* reflected the new material added to the *Annotations* of *1519*, material

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509 *Ratio* 632 with n744. Erasmus speaks here in clearly positive terms of 'philosophizing' as the application from the life of Christ to moral issues in the life of the Christian and to ecclesial issues in the life of the church. In the *Annotations* Erasmus speaks more frequently in negative terms of 'philosophizing,' but there the term is applied generally to the 'extraction' by clergy and theologians of 'special meanings' in the text of Scripture by an analysis of the Vulgate Latin expressions, special meanings that are irrelevant to the corresponding expression in the Greek. Cf eg the annotation on Eph 6:13 (*et in omnibus perfecti stare*).

510 Cf n498 above.

511 For the quotations see the *Ratio* 644, 656 with n878, and 633 with n749, respectively.

512 On obscurity see the *Ratio* 640–8; on hyperbole and irony, 649–56; on faith, 659 with n895.

513 Cf *Ratio* 680 with n1001.

characterized by a more severe critique of scholasticism than in *1516*, a more explicit, more persuasive, and less relenting attack on the vices of clergy and on the misplaced priority awarded to ceremonies in the life of the church; at the same time a more passionate advocacy of the philosophy of Christ, embodied in the virtues of faith and charity, and described in the extended portrait of the gentle Jesus, the conscientious shepherd caring for the flock, ready to forgive rather than rage against the errant. Similarly the interest in hermeneutics evident in the *Ratio* in the images of the time periods and the circles, and in the extensive account of the figures of speech, will have its counterpart in the *Annotations* of *1519*.

### 3/ THE NARRATIVE PREFACES: THE CONTRA MOROSOS AND THE 'INDEXES'

Following the *Apologia*, which was little changed from *1516*,[514] Erasmus in *1519* added a letter to the reader, a piece commonly known as the *Contra morosos* or *Capita*.[515] The letter constituted, in effect, a second defence (after the *Apologia*), and to it was added, further, seven 'indexes' listing the 'errors' in the Vulgate – solecisms, additions to the text, omissions – as Erasmus had demonstrated these in the annotations. The procedure seems forensic: the *Contra morosos* moves in its argumentation from refutation by rational arguments to an expansive citation of witnesses, and these are followed in turn by a sort of deposition of evidence in the indexes.[516] While from a rhetorical point of view this was an effective arrangement, it had the practical disadvantage that the entries, placed with the prefaces in the first volume, were keyed to the pages of the annotations, which in *1519* were now in the second (and separate) volume.

Erasmus' correspondence gives ample evidence of the breadth and the force of criticism his New Testament project had aroused. In 1514 Maarten van Dorp, representing Louvain theologians, had challenged the authority of the Greek manuscripts. In a letter to Henry Bullock in 1516 Erasmus attests that the question of ecclesiastical 'authority' had already arisen: what

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514 Cf n486 above.

515 The text is preceded on the first page by the address to the reader: 'Erasmus of Rotterdam to the Reader Concerning this Second Edition: Greetings'; on subsequent pages the upper margins bore the words from which the title is derived: *Capita argumentorum contra morosos quosdam ac indoctos* 'The Chief Points in the Arguments Answering Some Crabby and Ignorant Critics.'

516 Thus, the piece belongs to the *genus iudiciale*; cf Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 3.9. Both the *Contra morosos* and the indexes (under the title 'Errors in the Vulgate') are printed in this volume, 799–863, 871–948.

authority did Erasmus have to make a new translation, a question that would persist.[517] Johann Maier of Eck had sent Erasmus a letter dated 2 February 1518 in which he challenged the fundamental hermeneutical historicizing presupposition of Erasmus, that the authors of Scripture were men with human failings, reflecting their own culture, a view implying that Scripture was not the inerrant word simply and solely of the Holy Spirit.[518] The pamphlet Erasmus carried to Basel in May 1518 denounced in ninety-five numbered paragraphs various aspects of his work: it complained, perhaps above all, of his objection to the solecisms of the Vulgate, it raised the question of authority, defended the Vulgate as inspired by the Holy Spirit and therefore as inerrant, and predicted that any challenge to the Scripture's inerrancy would bring the eventual collapse of the faith.[519] From the *Contra morosos* we may infer other charges, perhaps less substantive: disrespect for the Translator of the Vulgate, irreverence towards the medieval exegetes, too much attention to minutiae.

The *Contra morosos* was a catch-all response to Erasmus' many critics. In it Erasmus offers little that is new; its purpose was, rather, essentially rhetorical. Here Erasmus was able to bring together both old and new criticisms, and with each of them answered and all of them in view, to make in the end a resounding appeal to his reader for a positive verdict on his work. After the refutation, Erasmus adds an amplification in which, Socratic-like, he demonstrates to the reader the kind of reward he should receive for his good services.[520] He concludes by bringing forward, one after another, men who have approved his work, distinguished witnesses from far and wide in Europe: Spain, Germany, Hungary, Britain, France, the Netherlands. He summarizes: 'Among the greatest I mention only the principal figures, though in fact I am daily overwhelmed by letters extending to me the good wishes and thanks of famous universities, of men outstanding for their learning, and of persons who are worthy of praise for their religious devotion.'[521]

If as a defence the *Contra morosos* covers little new ground, it does articulate with considerable clarity two points in the Erasmian hermeneutic. Erasmus distinguishes clearly between biblical author and biblical translator: 'A translator does not deserve the same honour as an evangelist.'[522] He

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517 Cf Epp 304:101–56 (from Dorp) and 456:159–95 (to Bullock).
518 Cf Ep 769:43–92. Erasmus replied immediately after he had arrived in Basel in May; cf Ep 844.
519 Cf Ep 843 passim; cf 107 with n464.
520 Cf *Contra morosos* paragraphs 103–5.
521 Cf *Contra morosos* paragraph 110c.
522 Cf *Contra morosos* paragraph 25.

qualifies the extent to which the Holy Spirit is present in the translator;[523] if the gift of the Spirit is not to be denied to the translator, he, Erasmus, can claim to share it himself.[524] Second, for those 'superstitiously' attached to the Vulgate, he distinguishes 'word' and 'meaning': 'Discourse consists of two elements: language as its body, and meaning as its soul.'[525] It is the meaning that is sacred, not the words.

### 4/ AIDS TO THE STUDY OF THE BIBLE

Bibles had for many centuries prefaced the text with certain aids to the reading of the Scriptures. The 1519 edition of the New Testament also offered preliminary materials that would facilitate the use of the edition. These materials took their place immediately after the indexes of errors in the Vulgate. Most important and very traditional was the 'Eusebian canon,' ten tables that enabled the reader to cross-reference parallel passages in the Gospels. But in the 1519 edition these tables were preceded by two pages (98–9) that served as a sort of frontispiece to the subsequent study aids. The first of these pages featured an illustration of the Trinity, below which was a chart in Greek representing the Trinity as both One and Three, and having the title (in Greek), 'The Nature of the True Faith of Us Christians, that is to say, the Godhead.' Not only did the title challenge the traditional confidence that the true faith resided in the Latin West, but the language of the chart 'differed from the Latin Creeds.'[526] Indeed, the equivalencies between the One and the Three were represented in language that had been problematic from the beginning of the Trinitarian debates, equating, for example, one God (*θεός*) with three *πρόσωπα* 'faces,' 'aspects,' 'persons,' one *οὐσία* 'essence,' and three *ὑποστάσεις* 'existences,''substances,' 'natures.'[527] The following page quoted the Nicene Creed with only minor variations from the standard form and added at the bottom an illustration representing faith. Edward Lee strongly objected.

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523 Cf *Contra morosos* paragraphs 21–2.

524 Cf *Contra morosos* paragraph27.

525 Cf *Contra morosos* paragraph 28.

526 Cf *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 42–3 and Ep 337:790–5, where Erasmus tells Maarten van Dorp that in the 'difference' between the Greeks and Latins 'the whole controversy relates to the word *hypostasis*, to the procession of the Holy Spirit … to the powers of the Holy Pontiff.'

527 For the ambiguity in the language and the consequent difficulties in early Christianity in establishing acceptable formulae see J.N.D. Kelly *Early Christian Doctrines* 5th rev ed (London 1977) especially 237–79. Cf also *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 3* (Note 22) CWE 72 396: 'Our side [the West] acknowledged three Persons, but not equally three *hypostaseis*.'

Erasmus affirmed that Froben, not he, was responsible for the illustration, and these two pages did not appear in subsequent editions.[528]

The ten tables of the Eusebian canon came next. Using a system of Greek alphabetic letters, these tables identified parallel passages in all four Gospels, in any three and in any two. The Eusebian canon was followed by indexes of the Eusebian chapters for each Gospel; these chapters were much shorter than the chapters traditional in the West (that is, in the Vulgate), hence more numerous. They were numbered and listed with brief captions in Greek indicating the theme of each chapter. A Latin translation of the Greek captions was provided in a column parallel to the Greek. Chapter caption and number (both in Greek) would then appear in the top margin of the text as the gospel narrative proceeded. Without the Bible verses as we know them, the Eusebian system gave ready access to all the pericopes of the gospel narratives.[529] In Erasmus' New Testament these pages might well have served a symbolic purpose, suggesting the priority of the Greek text, reflecting respect for the Greek tradition of biblical scholarship, and confirming Erasmus' work as a humanist endeavour. The index of chapters for each Gospel was preceded by Jerome's 'Life' of the evangelist, thus replacing the very brief synopsis of the lives of the four evangelists taken from 'Dorotheus' in the first edition.[530]

## *Text and Translation*

### 1/ THE GREEK TEXT

In preparing the Greek text of *1519* Erasmus had carefully reviewed the manuscripts available to him in Basel that he had collated for the first edition, and collated other manuscripts as well.[531] There were relatively few substantive changes. Many changes were merely the correction of the frequent

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528 The two pages of the Corsendonck manuscript, as well as their 'imitation' in the 1519 edition, are illustrated on 139–42 below.

529 An appendix to this chapter illustrates how the system works, 138–47.

530 For an English translation of the 'Lives' see *Saint Jerome On Illustrious Men* trans Thomas P. Halton FOTC 100 (Washington DC 1999) 10 (Matthew), 17 (Mark), 15 (Luke), 19 (John). These 'lives' (in Latin) matched the 'Lives' (in Greek) attributed to Sophronius that were placed before the text of each Gospel; cf 109 with n478 above, and for illustrations, 978.

531 Tunstall had apparently provided a Greek manuscript (*Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 6); cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 104 and 105 with nn436, 442. The monks of Corsendonck had provided two, one Greek and one Latin; cf 106–7 with n462. See Rummel *Erasmus' Annotations* 39 (but there is no evidence that Erasmus had the *codex aureus* for the second edition, as Rummel claims).

misspellings and misprints in the edition of 1516. Because of the similarity in Greek of the first and second personal pronouns in the plural (eg ἡμεῖς 'we,' ὑμεῖς 'you'), these two words were easily confused in *1516* and numerous corrections were made in *1519*. In some cases Erasmus changed the text in accordance with a variant he had noted in his annotations of *1516*, but which had not at that time found its way into the text. In *1516* in a brief annotation on Mark 3:34 (*et circumspiciens*) Erasmus had cited the Greek text as including the word 'disciples' ('looking at the disciples who sat around him'), but in his text he had instead printed 'those'; 'disciples' was substituted in the text of *1519* – he thought the change significantly affected the image. Some substitutions were made on the basis of conjecture: in Romans 12:11 he substituted 'time' for 'Lord' – 'serving the time' – primarily on the basis of conjecture, and later received the criticism of Frans Titelmans.[532] In 2 Corinthians 1:6–7 Erasmus changed the structure of thought by rearranging the clauses and endeavoured, in a *1519* annotation (*consolamur et ipsi*), to work his way through the thought of Paul, which tradition had found sufficiently difficult that several major variants are found in the manuscripts. Thus in *1516* Erasmus printed a Greek text that placed the 'hope' clause between two hypothetical alternatives. To paraphrase: If I suffer, it is for your comfort and the salvation you gain by sharing my suffering, of which I am confidently hopeful; if I am comforted, it is for your comfort and salvation. This reading, Erasmus averred in *1519*, was the reading of the Greek, but he preferred to adopt a reading that sharpened the contrast implied in the two alternatives by placing them in close juxtaposition: If I suffer, it is for your comfort and the salvation you gain by sharing my suffering, and if I am comforted, it is for your comfort and salvation, of which I am confidently hopeful.[533]

**2/** LATIN TRANSLATION

In the translation of *1519* Erasmus clearly undertook to improve the translation of *1516*. While some further changes would be made in subsequent editions, particularly in the third (1522), the translation of *1519* otherwise essentially fixed the translation for the future. The extent of changes made

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532 Cf the annotation on Rom 12:11 ('serving the Lord') with n2, and *Responsio ad Collationes* CWE 73 248.

533 Cf ASD VI-3 339. AV follows Erasmus' *1519* text; RSV sharpens the contrast by placing the alternatives in direct juxtaposition without any intervening words; DV adds a third alternative: 'If I suffer … if I am comforted … if I am exhorted' – cf the Clementine Vulgate, Weber 1789:6n.

in *1519* varies, generally depending on the degree to which the *1516* translation had been refined. In Matthew and generally throughout the Epistles, revisions in the translation of *1519* were far less extensive than those that had been made from the Vulgate in the *1516* translation, while Luke, on the other hand, where the translation had been somewhat neglected in *1516*, saw considerable further revision in *1519*.

Several features characterize the revisions made in *1519*. Many changes reflected Erasmus' desire to bring to the text of the Bible a Latin that conformed to normal classical usage, a practice well begun in *1516*: *servare* for the Vulgate's *salvum facere* 'to save'; *stuprum* for *fornicatio* 'fornication'; *praecipere / praeceptum* for *mandare / mandatum* 'to order,' 'enjoin,' 'instruct' / 'order,' ' command,' 'instruction'; similarly words expressing marriage and adultery. 'Standard Latin' also meant replacing Latinized Greek words in the Vulgate with words authentically Latin: *offendere* for *scandalizere* 'to offend'; *spectrum* for *phantasma* 'ghost,' 'phantom'; *vaticinari* for *prophetari* 'to prophesy'; *precatio / deprecatio* for *oratio* 'prayer.' Some changes had an indisputable theological significance: *sermo* for the Vulgate *verbum* 'word'; *famulus* for *puer* 'servant'; *resipiscere* for *poenitere / poenitentiam agere* 'repent' – in the case of this last, to avoid the implication of 'public satisfaction' connoted in ecclesiastical circles by the Vulgate word. Of great interest is the tendency in *1519* to translate the Greek *ὀλιγόπιστος* 'of little faith,' a word found in the Gospels, with expressions that interpret faith as 'trust.'

Moreover, in *1519* Erasmus carried further the practice begun in *1516* of translating quite freely at points in the interest both of Latinity and clarity. A striking example appears in the translation of Luke 21:8, where Erasmus changed the construction from direct to indirect discourse, and observed in a *1522* addition to the annotation on the verse that he was deliberately translating freely.[534] Sometimes clarity invited paraphrase or circumlocution. In Acts 14:15 Paul tells the pagans of Lystra that he and Barnabas are 'men of like nature with you.' Erasmus drew out the meaning of the Greek *ὁμοιοπαθεῖς* in an extended expression with more imagistic precision: 'We are men subject to evils in the same way you are.' As a mode of translation, this continued

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534 Cf the annotation (*dicentes quia ego sum* 'saying that I am he'), which Erasmus translated 'saying that he is the Christ.' He adds, 'I have translated freely rather than literally – so no one should suppose I have merely made a mistake'! The problem in the Vulgate construction is explained in 'Solecisms' #13 with n8 in 'Errors in the Vulgate' 877.

a practice well established in *1516*.[535] In fact, Erasmus even went so far as to accept an addition to the Latin text that had no warrant whatever in the Greek. In his annotation on Revelation 9:11 (*Latine nomen habet exterminans*) Erasmus had in *1516* defended the Vulgate's comment that had been gratuitously added to the Greek text where the name of the 'angelic king' is given in both Hebrew (transliterated) and Greek – *Apollyon* in the latter. Here the Vulgate rather crudely adds, 'And in Latin the name is *exterminator*,' an addition Erasmus retained in *1516*. In *1519* Erasmus still made no apology on behalf of the Translator 'who wanted Latin speakers to know the meaning of Apollyon,' but he attempted to make the interpretive addition less abrupt, replacing it in his translation with the more elegant 'that is, the destroyer'!

The precision in translation for which Erasmus had striven in *1516* was in fact motivated by the desire to express with clarity the thought of the biblical author. Erasmus had seen then that clarity demanded likewise a precise understanding of the movement of thought in more or less extended passages. He had demonstrated in *1516* the true relation of clauses in Romans 8:33 with an understanding of the passage that would avoid the 'blasphemy' of the 'current' liturgical reading. In *1519* he carried further this mode of clarification. He did so with striking results in the translation of the much more extended passage of Luke 1:70–3. The Vulgate had left the obscurity of thought inherent in the Greek.[536] In *1516* Erasmus had made some attempt at clarification; in *1519* he completed the task, so that his translation read: 'As he spoke through the prophets … that we would be saved … that he would show mercy … and remember his covenant … and would fulfil the oath … and grant to us … that we might serve him.' The clue to the sequence of thought was to recognize that a whole series of verbs was dependent on the first verb of speaking – 'as he spoke.' The sense of the entire passage was now crystal clear.

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535 Cf Ep 809:73–6: Erasmus says that he was 'sparing of changes' in the first edition to avoid the annoyance of fault finders, but 'on the advice of good scholars' he had attempted rather more in that direction in the second edition – a generalization that requires some qualification, as we have seen.

536 Standard English translations (DV, AV, RSV) have followed the Greek text rather closely. Both NEB and NRSV, however, have attempted to clarify the sequence of thought and have arrived at essentially Erasmus' reading of the verses, though with a minor variation between them. Cf 'Obscure Passages' #5 in 'Errors in the Vulgate' 889. A long *1519* addition to the annotation on Rom 2:1 ('because of which') reflects particularly well Erasmus' very determined effort to read a large portion of the biblical text in intellegible sequence.

Finally, in *1519* Erasmus began a practice that would continue throughout all the subsequent editions: the use of a smaller font to mark clearly in the translation those passages for which the textual evidence was accepted by Erasmus as insecure, as in the doxology following the Lord's Prayer in Matthew, or in which he himself had added words in Latin to clarify the Greek – in this way again acknowledging freedom in translation.[537]

These changes in *1519* without question brought Erasmus' translation, originally based on the Vulgate, to a new level of sophistication. But his translation as a whole was still far from a model of Latinity. The changes were by no means thoroughgoing: in some passages Erasmus' crisp and energetic Latin jostled side by side with the awkward expression of the Vulgate translation, and at many points the opportunity for change seems to have been overlooked, due perhaps to Erasmus' methods of work, at times apparently haphazard. But Erasmus may sometimes have preferred to leave a taste of the Vulgate. On numerous occasions an identical expression appearing at both the beginning and end of a relatively small passage in the Vulgate will, in Erasmus' translation, be changed in the first instance but not in the second;[538] we must assume that in some cases at least the variation was deliberate.

## *Volume II: The Annotations*

### 1/ GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

In the autumn of 1517 Erasmus spoke rather jauntily of the transformation his first edition was undergoing: '… [it] is now being taken to pieces and refashioned so thoroughly that it will be a new book.'[539] But as Erasmus' preparation of a second edition became known, 'detractors,' 'purveyors of calumny,' apparently from the religious orders, publicly scorned his project, observing maliciously that the 'new edition' proved his 'dissatisfaction with the old.'[540] In response, Erasmus defended the new edition on several grounds: he wanted

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537 As roman script was used for folio editions, these passages were in small roman script from *1519* to *1527*; in *1535*, however, the passages were placed in italics; this applied to the doxology concluding the Lord's Prayer: the text was printed in the Greek column, the Latin translation appeared in small roman (*1519–27*) or italic font (*1535*). Cf 'Interpolations' #20 in 'Errors in the Vulgate' 929.

538 Eg if the Vulgate's *poenitentiam agere* should appear twice within a few lines Erasmus might change to his preferred *resipiscere* on the first occasion but leave the Vulgate's *poenitentiam agere* on the second.

539 Cf Ep 694:18–21.

540 Cf Ep 809:6–67.

# IN EPISTOLAM PAVLI
## AD TIMOTHEVM PRIOREM, ANNOTATIONES DES. ERASMI ROTERODAMI.

SECVNDVM imperiū.)κατ᾽ἐπιταγήν. Apertè hic erat, iuxta iniunctionē, siue delegationem. nam ἐπιτάττειν est iniungere & mandare quippiā. Sentit eñ de munere apostolico, qd᾽ nō ipse sibi uindicarit, sed ab ipso Christo fuerit delegatum. Annotauit hoc Chrysostomus, indicās plus esse ex delegatione ac iussu apostolum quam uocatum dici.

Dei saluatoris nostri.) Hic certe nemo poterit tergiuersari, quin pater dictus sit saluator, ut nihil agant, qui qd᾽ est in epistola ad Titum, Apparuit benignitas & humanitas saluatoris nostri dei, uolunt ad filiū referri. Et Christi Iesu spei nostræ.) τῆς ἐλπίδος ἡμῶν. Apertius erat, à Iesu, qui est spes nostra. Pater seruator.

Dilecto filio.) γνησίῳ τέκνῳ. i. germano filio. Et ita legit Ambrosius. atq; adeo Chrysostomus, aut quisquis fuit eius operis autor. licet interpres ubiq; infulserit suum charissimus. Cum eñ tot uerbis agit de similitudine filij patrē referētis, satis declarat se γνήσιον legisse nō ἀγαπητόν. Germanū uocat, uerū & ingenuū non adulterinū, qd᾽ per omnia responderet spirituali patri Paulo, id qd᾽ est filiorū, referre parentē, & non degenerare. Sed de hac uoce aliās dictum est. Dilecto, p germano.

Gratia & misericordia.) Græci non addunt cōiunctiones hoc loco. sed gratia, misericordia, pax. & ad eum sanè modum legit Ambrosius. Christo Iesu domino nostro.) Græcanici codices iterant domini cognomen, κυρίου ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. i. à domino Iesu Christo, qui est dominus noster. quasi aliter sit dominus omniū, aliter fidelium, quos peculiariter possidet. Quanq; dissentit & Ambrosius & uulgata æditio. Vulgarius contra nobiscum facit. Nos græcam lectionē non mutauimus, sed ita ut liberū sit lectori, utram uolet sequi. Sicut rogaui te.) παρεκάλεσά σε. Quanq; græca uox anceps est, tamen hic magis quadrabat, hortatus sum, ut Vallæ placet. Tametsi Paulus eo uerbo nonnunq; usus est erga plebeios. Porrò quod Stapulensis admonet καθὼς potius uertendum fuisse sic, quam sicut, quid sibi uelit prorsus nō intelligo. Necq; eñ, opinor, καθὼς accipi posse pro ὅτι πῶς. Faber.

Vt remaneres Ephesi.) Oratio plenior græce q; latine, propterea qd᾽ πορευόμενον potest esse uel infinitiui modi uel imperatiui, quantū ad sensum attinet. Sicut te rogaui manere, maneto. Atq; ita legisse uidet Ambrosius, qui legit, ut denunciares. qd᾽ nō quadraret, nisi accederet, manere, aut simile uerbū. Ne aliter docerēt.) μὴ ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν. i. ne diuersa doceant, aut potius ne diuersis uterentur doctoribus. uerbo cōposito, ab ἕτερος alius, & διδάσκαλος doctor. ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν, qd᾽ est, nunc his, nunc illis uti doctoribus. Quanq; Chrysostomus & hunc secutus Vulgarius, ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν interpretanē diuersam inducere doctrinā, ut ad pseudapostolos pertineat.

Interminatis.) ἀπεράντοις. i. quæ finē nō habent, cuiusmodi ferè nunc sunt uulgariū Theologorū quodlibeta. nam quo plus est eiusmodi quæstiuncularū, hoc plus etiā subscatet è calib⁹ nunq; finiendis, quorū etiā si milies mille milia produxeris, plura tamē supererūt. Chrysostomus putat hunc locū nō esse accipiendum de historia ueteris testamenti. Sed Ambrosius palam de ea uidetur interpretari, cum ait. Ne oblectarentur fabulis quas narrare consueti sunt Iudæi de generatione suarum originum de Abraham & Isaac, & cæteris patriarchis, & de circumcisione, & de ijs quæ postea tradita sunt à Moyse, cæteraq; quæ sequuntur in hanc sententiam. Ac mihi sanè, ne hi quidem ad ueram Christianamq; pietatem magnopere uidentur facere, qui de Christi genealogia tam anxie tamq; penè dixerim iudaice disputant. Atq; in totum ex ueteris testamenti libris pro rei commoditate delibari quædam magis probarim, quam illorum

Quæstionū examina.

Iudaicæ genealogiæ.



The annotations on the First Epistle of Paul to Timothy, 1519, chapter 1, with marginalia
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to surpass himself; he wanted to be less cautious than he felt constrained to be in the first edition and to make more and bolder changes; he wanted to support his changes by 'naming' his authorities; he wanted to include additional references; and he recognized the need to make some alterations, especially where he had 'offended learned and pious ears.'[541]

Certainly the *Annotations* volume was both a new book and a revision of the old. As a revision of the old, it retained the fundamental purpose of the first edition to defend his translation, and in doing so to provide a clarification of Scripture based on philological observation and analysis. It also retained the formal characteristics of a work of annotations as established in the first edition: in addition to philological notes, desultory observations on the human situation, as occasion permitted biting criticism of social and ecclesiastical affairs, the inclusion now and then of a story of human interest, a note on an issue of theological importance, and the discernible presence of the author in dialogue with the reader. And yet, virtually every one of these characteristics will be magnified, their force intensified, in the second edition.

This development of the formal characteristics of the *1516 Annotations* was facilitated by the amplitude of space available in *1519*, when an entire volume was devoted to annotation, and there was space to accent certain features, perhaps above all the criticism of ecclesiastical affairs against a background of heightened emphasis upon the philosophy of Christ and the idealizing portrait of the primitive church. The additional space also permitted Erasmus to fulfil the philological task more thoroughly: new annotations filled gaps left in *1516*, and additions to old annotations broadened, sometimes very significantly, the discussions in the first edition. Further, the new book gave room for the inclusion of more references to sources, while naming the sources specifically added a welcome precision.[542] There were, however, two aspects of the *1519* edition that contributed especially to its new cast: the persistent, sometimes lengthy quotations from the sources and the prevalence of long notes. Neither lengthy quotations nor long notes were absolutely new to the second edition, but they occur with a frequency that

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541 Cf Ep 809:67–81.

542 To judge from the comments in the published debate in 1520, the conversations between Erasmus and Lee in the autumn of 1517 may well have added stimulus to Erasmus' examination of the patristic texts and fostered a determination to cite them with greater precision; cf Lee's persistent critique of Erasmus' citation of the Fathers in the first edition in *Responsio ad annotationes Lei* CWE 72 passim. Cf also 'New Testament Scholarship' 101–2 with n422.

was unaccustomed in the first. The effect was to give to the philological undertaking a more exegetical cast.

**2/** PHILOLOGY AND HERMENEUTICS

That Erasmus understood his work in *1519* to rest firmly on the foundation of philology is suggested by his self-characterization in the second edition as a *literator* 'grammarian,' when he writes in the annotation on John 5:6 (*cognovisset quia iam multum tempus haberet*): 'Since I am fulfilling the task of a grammarian, I am not reluctant to point this out also, that here you must supply an expression [from the preceding sentence].' As in *1516*, so in *1519* he explored, sometimes at length, the formation and meaning of words, citing classical and biblical analogies.[543] He contends for proper pronunciation of Greek words[544] and continues to exemplify the force of the definite article.[545] The philologist's contempt for solecisms casts a lurid gleam on the bitter criticism of his objectors in the annotation on Matthew 6:12 (*et dimitte*), just as it invites mocking laughter from the story of the 'priest leaper' in the annotation on Acts 10:16 (*per ter*). And stylistic criticism of Scripture, reported from Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*, emerges at several points.[546]

Sometimes Erasmus calls rather sharp attention to the hermeneutical significance of philology. In the *Ratio* prefatory to the *1519* edition Erasmus had given some prominence to figures of speech; in the annotation on Mark 8:31 (*post tres dies*) he makes a general case, almost passionately, for the important role tropes play in Scripture and the consequent necessity of the interpreter to recognize them: 'How many times do the sacred Doctors open the sense of Holy Writ through hyperbole, enallage, and similar tropes! Now allegory, similitudes – terms appearing frequently in sacred literature – surely these are figures that belong to the domain of the grammarian. Why do we keep philologists so far from the sacred books when they deserve much

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543 Cf eg *1519* additions to the annotations on Luke 11:53 (*et os eius opprimere*) and 1 Tim 5:11 (*cum enim luxuriatae fuerint in Christo*).

544 Cf eg the *1519* addition to the annotation on Matt 1:16 (*qui vocatur Christus*), where Erasmus acknowledges that the matter of pronunciation is 'not a major issue, but relevant nevertheless'; and the addition to the annotation on John 14:21 (*paracletus autem spiritus sanctus*), where he calls the mispronunciation of 'paraclete' a sacrilege! Cf *Contra morosos* paragraph 8.

545 Cf eg the annotations on John 1 passim.

546 Cf eg the annotations on Rom 13:8 ('owe no one anything') and 13:14 ('in desires'); also on 2 Cor 6:9 (*sicut qui ignoti et cogniti*), cited as an annotation on 2 Cor 6:8 in ASD VI-8.

better from divine literature than do some frigid and jejune dialecticians, not to say sophists?' Indeed, Erasmus found the recognition of the figure of hyberbole absolutely essential to the interpretation of Scripture. In *1516* he had pointed to the figure in the interpretation of Colossians 1:23 (*quod praedicatum est in universa creatura*), but in *1519* he added a forceful generalization: 'If anyone does not accept hyperbole in divine literature, let him quarrel with Jerome, Origen, Chrysostom, and Augustine who frequently point out this figure.' Again, in *1519* he added a new annotation on Matthew 5:39 (*praebe ei et alteram*) not only pointing to hyperbole as the key to grasping the true sense of the radical injunction but also distinguishing hyperbole from a falsehood.

Two issues arose from the *1516* annotations that forced Erasmus to articulate more clearly the relation between the human and the divine in the composition of the text of the New Testament. Philology, to be sure, sought to establish the author of a text, but the question was problematic for Scripture: was the author of Scripture the Holy Spirit or the human writer? Erasmus had acknowledged in his *1516* annotation on Matthew 2:6 (*et tu Bethlehem*) the view that misquotations from the Old Testament in the New could have arisen from a memory lapse on the part of the apostolic author. He had also affirmed in his annotation on Acts 10:38 (*quomodo unxit eum*) that the apostles spoke the common language of their day. Both positions challenged the claim that the words of the biblical text were written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, so that they were necessarily proper and correct and the statements inerrant.[547] Johann Maier of Eck had criticized the position Erasmus had taken in both annotations.[548] In the *1519* annotations Erasmus replied with the incarnational view of Scripture he had articulated in the prefatory *Contra morosos*: the text of Scripture was the result of the cooperative effort between the divine Spirit and the human writer.[549] The Holy Spirit controlled the apostolic mind in such a way that it permitted the apostles sometimes to err but with no harm to the Gospel, indeed even to its advantage.[550] In the case of apostolic language, Erasmus granted that the apostles had indeed received the gift of the Spirit, but there came with this gift only the skill required for the work of the Gospel.[551] Accordingly, in the *1519* comments on

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547 Both annotations were relatively brief in *1516*.

548 Cf Ep 769:43–83. See 'New Testament Scholarship' 61 with n248 for the discussion of Erasmus' 'historical perspective' on biblical language as the issue appeared in the first edition.

549 Cf *Contra morosos* paragraphs 21–2, 25, 27–8.

550 Cf the *1519* addition to the annotation on Matt 2:6 ASD VI-5 100:808–14.

551 Cf the*1519* addition to the annotation on Acts 10:38 ASD VI-6 250:671–9.

the Pauline Epistles Erasmus repeatedly observes as a philological fact the faulty Greek of the Apostle. He offers a telling observation in the annotation on 2 Corinthians 2:13 (*non habeo requiem in spiritui meo*): 'This is that Titus whom some think Paul desired because he was more skilled [in Greek] … Thomas [Aquinas] mentions this view but rejects it so that he would not deprive the apostles of the gift of tongues.' Good hermeneutics rests on the foundation of good philology!

### 3/ THE AUTHORITIES AND THE ANNOTATOR'S AUTHORITY

In *1519* Erasmus continued to bring to bear on his discussions the commentaries on Scripture written by the great exegetes of the past. References already made in *1516* to these commentaries were amplified in *1519*, and new citations from them were added, thus enriching the texture of the annotations with the more sustained voice of the Fathers and the voice of Scripture. The commentaries cited are virtually the same as those in the 1516 edition, but they appear in proportions quite different from that in *1516*. Among patristic commentaries, the homilies of Origen on Matthew, Luke, and Romans assume a considerably larger place than in the *1516* annotations. On the other hand, Jerome's commentaries on Matthew, Galatians, Ephesians, Titus, and Philemon are cited with less frequency in the *1519* additions than they had been in *1516*, while the Greek scholia on the Pauline Epistles, heavily cited in *1516*, make almost no appearance in the *1519* additions, except in the annotations on 2 Corinthians. Again, the work of the medieval and Renaissance Latin exegetes is widely disregarded in *1519*; even Valla, so crucial in *1516* to the Lukan books, receives very few acknowledged citations in *1519*. The *Glossa ordinaria* began to make an appearance in *1519*, but only sparingly.[552]

Among the medieval exegetes, however, the Greek Theophylact continued to be cited with regularity in *1519*. Even in the first edition Erasmus had recognized him as an exegete 'by no means to be rejected.'[553] In fact, he holds a special place in Erasmus' work between the first and second editions, and it is appropriate here to recall the story of the discovery of the real Theophylact. In *1516* Erasmus, following a name he saw in the Greek manuscript available in Basel, had cited him as Vulgarius. While preparing the second edition in the Netherlands, he was loaned a copy of a Latin translation of what purported to be a commentary by Athanasius. In the spring of 1518

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552 Cf ASD IX-2 79 379n; CWE 44 XV with n29; and the annotation on Matt 12:31 (*spiritus autem blasphemiae*).

553 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 80 with n319.

he was apparently permitted to carry this to Basel, where he compared the Latin translation with the Greek commentary of 'Vulgarius' and discovered that this 'Athanasius' was in fact 'Vulgarius,' who had been given the false name of 'Athanasius' in the translation to make the work a more pleasing gift to the pope for whom it was destined! Just before the second edition was published, he discovered that the real name of Vulgarius was 'Theophylact'; he was able to change the name on the title page, but 'Vulgarius' remained in the text, where it was changed in the third edition of 1522.[554]

In *1516* commentaries on Scripture had been the staple patristic resource for citation in the annotations, though Erasmus had included other patristic works, sparsely except in the case of Jerome, knowledge of whom enabled him to cite from a wide range of the *opera* beyond Jerome's commentaries on Scripture. The same pattern persists in the *1519* annotations, though three authors received fresh attention. Erasmus had clearly perused in Jerome's translation the *De spiritu sancto* of Didymus the Blind, and the annotations were enriched by references to a selection from the treatises of Cyprian, of whose *opera* Erasmus published an edition in 1520. But perhaps nothing astonishes the reader of the *1519* annotations so much as the grasp Erasmus demonstrates of the works of Augustine, implying a major programme of reading from the African bishop undertaken by Erasmus between 1516 and 1519. Erasmus' reading of Augustine was no doubt spurred on by a proposal, apparently in 1517, to edit the *Opera omnia* of the bishop, perhaps also by the complaint that Erasmus appeared in *1516* to be ignorant of Augustine.[555] Apart from a generous sprinkling in *1516* of citations from Augustine's commentaries on John and Galatians, explicit references to Augustine are relatively few. In *1519* Erasmus added numerous new references not only to those two commentaries, but also to other works on the New Testament – one might note in particular the *Sermones de verbis Domini* and the *Sermones de verbis apostoli* (both now regarded as spurious). In fact, Erasmus cites more than forty different

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554 Cf 106 with n461. For further details in this fascinating story of philological sleuthing see the annotation on Rom 1:4 ('who was predestined'); the annotations on 2 Cor 5:17 (*si qua ergo in Christo nova creatura*) and Col 2:20 (*decernitis*); Ep 1790:10–32; also ASD IX-2 92 643n, 130 437n, 192 493n. Curiously, both names (Vulgarius and Theophylact) appear in the index of 'Interpolations' in all editions from 1519 to 1527; cf 'Interpolations' #10 in 'Errors in the Vulgate' 926 with n19.

555 For the proposed edition see Ep 581:22 with 22n; for the accusation of ignorance see the letter from Johann Maier of Eck, Ep 769:93–114; and for Erasmus' somewhat testy reply, Ep 844:183–230.

works of Augustine that he specifically names, and there is as well a large number of citations from works left unidentified. Of the works named, the most frequently cited are the *Enarrationes in psalmos*, the letters of Augustine, the *In Heptateuchum quaestiones,* the *In Heptateuchum locutiones*, the *De civitate Dei*, and the *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*. Of other works some are cited only once, some several times. Clearly, in *1519* Erasmus proved himself a master of Augustine as he had shown himself a master of Jerome in *1516*. And yet while he modified his harsh view of Augustine expressed in 1516,[556] he continued in *1519* to cast a shadow over the saint because he had failed to learn the biblical languages as a youth; and even in old age, although forced by the challenge of heretics to learn Greek, he never really mastered the language.[557]

Two further developments characterized the *1519* annotations. First, as Erasmus indicated in a letter to Marcus Laurinus (Lauwerijns), he intended in the second edition to 'name more frequently his authorities,'[558] a resolve he applied not only to the exegetes but to manuscripts. Specificity fostered authority. Specificity was applied elsewhere, too. While Erasmus boasted that he never named his critics, in the second edition he was prepared to name, for example, the monastic orders. Such specificity added force to the narrative. Second, Erasmus took advantage of the amplitude of the *Annotations* volume to quote his sources, and particularly the exegetes, much more fully than he had done in *1516*. Sometimes he introduces the quotation with a prejudicial reason: he quotes Jerome 'because of the slanderers'; he quotes Augustine so that 'no one will distrust him [Erasmus]'; he quotes Thomas Aquinas so that no one in the future will have any confidence in such grandiose interpretations 'from people who make pronouncements about matters of which they know nothing'; he quotes Theophylact to show how faulty the Latin translation is; he quotes an ancient translation cited by Augustine 'partly to clarify the sense, partly to show how widely it differed from the Vulgate,

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556 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 77, 79 with nn310, 313.

557 Cf *Methodus* n32. Although in *1519* Erasmus modified the annotation on John 21:21 (cf n314 above), nevertheless in *1519* the annotation continued to deplore Augustine's lack of Greek. Cf also the annotation on Rom 14:5 ('for one judges'), where Erasmus said (*1519*) that Augustine 'seems to be living in some other world when he writes this,' a comment Agostino Steuco as late as 1531 found egregiously objectionable; cf Allen Ep 2513:468–73.

558 Ep 809:76–7. Erasmus' somewhat greater attention to precision and specificity in the second edition may have been spurred on by Edward Lee; cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* CWE 72 98. Indeed the *Responsio* reflects Lee's consistent critique of Erasmus' use of patristic sources; cf n542 above.

thus undercutting the view that the Vulgate's language was irreplaceable.[559] The effect of such substantial quotations goes well beyond the demonstration of the immediate point: the quotations lend authority to the annotator and weight the text with the language of the Fathers and of Scripture, deepening the exegetical and homiletic resonance of the annotations.

### 4/ SOME ACID SKETCHES OF RELIGION

Erasmus had already in *1516* applied skilfully the technique of turning a philological note into a sharply barbed, often unexpected criticism of his contemporary world. In *1519* remarks of this kind frequently became more intense, more sustained, and more vitriolic. Many of the most memorable attack ecclesiastical practices, of which I cite only a few as exemplary. Erasmus links popular superstition to the avarice of clergy: through avarice the clergy deliberately foster superstition among their people. It is for gain that the 'milk of Mary … the foreskin of Christ' are everywhere on display. Such practices are not merely permitted as a necessary accommodation to the weakness of the Christian plebs but are promoted as the 'sum of religion.'[560] The condemnation of war was by no means new to the annotations in *1519*, but in the second edition Erasmus adds force to the complaints of *1516*. In the annotation on Matthew 5:11 (*omne malum*) he points to bishops, theologians, and monks as the fomenters of war, men who 'praise war even in the churches,' and he verifies by his own witness that priestly advocacy of war has borne fruit to clerical ambition: 'I have known some who have risen to the episcopacy by singing the praises of war.' The contradiction between ecclesiastical rules and actual practice in the matter of celibacy receives a bold and vivid expression in the annotation on 1 Timothy 3:2 (*unius uxoris virum*): when we consider how many people fill roles requiring celibacy and then consider how few of them retain their chastity, in what terrible lusts they indulge,

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559 For Jerome see the annotation on Matt 27:8 (*ager ille Acheldemach*); for Augustine, the annotation on Rom 14:5 ('for one judges'); for Thomas, the annotation on 1 Cor 14:11 (*et qui loquitur mihi*); for Theophylact, the annotation on Col 2:20 (*decernitis*); for the translation cited by Augustine, the annotation on 2 Pet 3:17 (*ne insipientium etc*).

560 Cf the annotation on Matt 23:5 (*ut videantur ab hominibus*) – a long *1519* addition to a brief sentence in *1516*; for the phrases quoted see ASD VI-5 298:709–300:718. 'Necessary accommodation': I use the term to reflect Erasmus' explanation of the concentric circles in the *Ratio*: clergy must sometimes accept practices that are not ideal but can be permitted because of the weakness of Christian people; cf 534 with n232.

perhaps we will come to the conclusion that for those who cannot maintain a chaste life marriage is far preferable.[561] In *1519* Erasmus darkened even further the description of church music, whose deplorable state he had already exposed in *1516*. 'What else do people hear but sounds signifying nothing? … We bring into the church a kind of operatic and theatrical music such as was never heard, I imagine, even in ancient Greece and Rome … filthy amorous songs to which prostitutes and mimic actors dance.'[562] He notes bitterly the mispronunciation of Scripture in liturgical readings, but he extends a dubious generosity: he will forgive those whose pronunciation is faulty because they have not been enlightened, but there can be no forgiveness for those who knowingly err![563] Allusion to his own experience adds the force of authorial presence when he exposes the ignorance and malice of preachers, as exhibited in one story. A preacher, in Erasmus' presence, publicly accused him of presumption and an assault on the truth – presumption because he dared to correct the 'Our Father,' assault on truth because he dared to say in private that a preacher whom he had heard did not understand the very base and foundation of his own sermon.[564]

### 5/ THE LONG NOTES

The formal character of the annotations easily accommodated long notes, and these were certainly not absent from the first edition.[565] But in the second edition long notes of nearly a page to several pages were more numerous and help to define the edition, particularly because of the extent to which they explore exegetical problems or address with intense concern ecclesiastical issues. Some of the long notes address the issue of the integrity and authority of Scripture, the relation between the Holy Spirit and the human author.[566] Other notes endeavour to defend the theological integrity of

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561 The passage quoted from the annotation on Matt 5:11 is found under Matt 5:12 in ASD; the passage from 1 Timothy is abbreviated and paraphrased.

562 Cf the annotation on 1 Cor 14:19 (*quam decem milia*) ASD VI-8 276:173–4, 186–91.

563 Cf the annotation on John 14:26 (*paracletus autem spiritus sanctus*) ASD VI-6 142:532–7.

564 Cf the annotation on 1 Pet 4:7 (*et vigilate*).

565 Cf eg the philological exploration in the annotations on Rom 1:4; the laudations of humanists and humanism in the annotations on Luke 1:4 (*eruditus est veritatem*) and 1 Thess 2:7 (*sed facti sumus parvuli*); and the 'apology' for the brevity of the *1516* edition and a promise of a second in an excursus preceding the annotations on Mark.

566 Eg the annotations on Matt 2:6 and Acts 10:38; cf 130 with n548 above.

Erasmus' interpretation of the biblical text, or of the text itself as printed in *1516*, in particular showing that neither interpretation nor text was a menace to the orthodox defence against Arianism.[567] Additions of nearly two pages turned the *1516* annotation on Luke 22:36 (*sed nunc qui habet sacculum*) into a very long note supporting Erasmus' condemnation of the indiscriminate use of the sword. He explores the interpretations of the Fathers – Origen, Augustine, and Theophylact – and in a contextual review of the passage derives his own interpretation that the sword in this Lukan passage designates the sword by which Christ cuts away the carnal affections.

In yet other long notes Erasmus undertook to find solutions to long-standing and historic exegetical problems. What was the sword that 'passed through Mary?' How could John the Baptist say that he did not know Christ? How could Jesus say that he would rise from the dead 'after three days' when in fact he arose on the third day? What exactly did Jesus reply to the Jews when they asked him who he was?[568] Erasmus' defence of his *1516* interpretation of Hebrews 2:7 extending to six pages in the 1519 edition was clearly directed against Lefèvre and was in effect a summary of his 1517 *Apologia ad Fabrum*.[569] Perhaps no problem was more historic than the one that arose from the famous confrontation of Peter by Paul in Antioch. Jerome had argued that although both apostles had acted in pretence, neither had sinned. Augustine had responded that Peter's pretence constituted sin inasmuch as, by implication, it placed the burden of the Law upon the gentiles. Erasmus attacked the arguments used to support Augustine as they had been neatly detailed by

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567 Cf the annotations on Phil 2:6 (*esse se aequalem Deo*) and 1 Tim 1:17 (*soli Deo*). The long addition to the annotation on Phil 2:6 evidently responds to criticism of the *1516* annotation raised by Hieronymus Dungersheim, whom Erasmus designated as the first critic of his version of the New Testament; cf Ep 1341A:864–5 and Ep 554, Dungersheim's letter to Erasmus (18 March 1517).

568 Cf respectively the annotations on Luke 2:35 (*et tuam ipsius animam*), John 1:31 (*ego nesciebam eum*), Mark 8:31 (*post tres dies*), and John 8:25 (*principium qui et loquor*). Erasmus refers to John's puzzling statement in John 1:31 in reference to exegetical method in the defence of orthodoxy; cf *Ratio* 687 with n1036. The long *1519* addition to the relatively brief *1516* annotation on John 8:25 was apparently occasioned by the criticism of Lee in the exchanges between him and Erasmus in the autumn of 1517, and possibly in later personal encounters in 1518; cf the postscript to Ep 886 (22 October 1518); and Erasmus' 1520 recollections of the discussions between the two men as recorded in *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 10 with n53 and *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* (Notes 72 and 92) CWE 72 179–87 and 201–14.

569 *Apologia ad Fabrum* translated in CWE 83

Thomas Aquinas and offered his own solution by a historical reconstruction of the situation; in Erasmus' solution both Jerome and Augustine acted with integrity in the context of their times.[570]

In addressing questions of this sort Erasmus adopted for his *Annotations* a feature that had characterized biblical exegesis from antiquity. The great exegetes of early Christianity did not shy away from confronting fundamental difficulties arising from the narrative of Scripture – the justification of the behaviour of Peter and Paul at Antioch being no doubt the most challenging. Although in *1516* Erasmus had noted some of these problems, in *1519* he provided for many of them a much more substantial discussion, a more incisive analysis, so that they became an important and identifiable feature of the *Annotations*.

Two of the long notes of *1519* make an exceptionally sustained and powerful appeal for reform. In the annotation on Matthew 11:30 (*iugum meum suave*) a single sentence in *1516* had explained the Greek *χρηστός* as 'easy,' 'agreeable' – 'my yoke is easy.' In *1519* Erasmus turned to a lengthy exposé of contemporary Christianity: the unencumbered teaching of Christ has become cumbersome, perplexing, and gloomy. Theologians define 'articles,' clergy impose regulations – for fasting, for holy days, for vows, for confession – all destructive. As Augustine said of his generation, the Christian is more oppressed with regulations than the Jew. Preachers heed the powerful; bishops, once expected to comfort and console, have become tyrants. Erasmus calls for a General Council, but adds that there is no hope unless Christ himself reverses the situation and arouses the hearts of princes and prelates to follow true piety. In what is by far the longest annotation in the *1519* edition (it extends over ten pages) Erasmus argues the case for permitting divorce and remarriage in certain situations, an annotation he himself says amounts to a little book. Erasmus had stated his position briefly in *1516* in an annotation on Matthew 19:8 (*ad duriciem cordis*). His position was unquestionably controversial,[571] and Erasmus clearly determined to articulate it with much greater force in *1519*. Consequently, for the second edition he revised the annotations on Matthew 19:1–9, adding a substantial note on

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570 Cf the annotation on Gal 2:11 (*in faciem ei restiti*). For 'problem solving' in the exegetical tradition exemplified in Augustine see 54 with n234. See also *Ratio* 557 with n352.

571 Cf Ep 1006:186–216, 280–321 (11 August 1519), where Erasmus responded to a critic of his *1516* annotation on Matt 19:8. The critic was Jacob of Hoogstraten, inquisitor for the archbishoprics of Cologne, Mainz, and Trier, who articulated his criticism in his book *Destructio cabalae*, published in April 1519. Many

Matthew 19:3 (*quaecumque ex causa*) that anticipates the ten-page annotation on 1 Corinthians 7:39 (*liberata est a lege, cui autem vult, nubat*). In this latter annotation Erasmus undertakes to remove the objections habitually raised to granting divorce, and to show by an elaborate exposition of biblical texts the grounds for granting in some circumstances both divorce and remarriage.[572]

**Appendix I**

Erasmus claimed that Froben had taken this illustration from the frontispiece of the Corsendonck manuscript (cf 121 with n526 above). As the reproductions on the following pages (139–42) show, the illustration of the Trinity in the 1519 edition is markedly different from that in the Greek codex, focusing attention on the suffering Christ, the God of redemption, and the throne of mercy, a motif expressed elsewhere in sixteenth-century painting, for example, in the work of Luca Signorella (1505, Uffizi Gallery, Florence), Albrecht Durer (1511; cf Erwin Panofsky *The Life and Art of Albrecht Durer* [Princeton 1955/1971] 139 and figure 185), and, later, El Greco (1577–8, Prado Museum, Madrid).

**Appendix II**

The following illustrations are intended to reveal the cross-referencing system for the text of the Gospels as the system appeared in the edition of 1519 and all subsequent editions. The passages in the illustrations tell the story of the leper cleansed, Matthew 8:1–4, Mark 1:40–5, Luke 5:12–16.

Turning to the illustration on page 144 (text of Matthew, page 14), note (directly opposite the Roman numeral VIII in the right margin) the $\xi\gamma$ in the left margin with a $\beta$ printed immediately below it. The $\beta$ indicates that the equivalencies are found in table 2 (page 143), where we will find (underlined) the letters for parallel passages in Mark and Luke.

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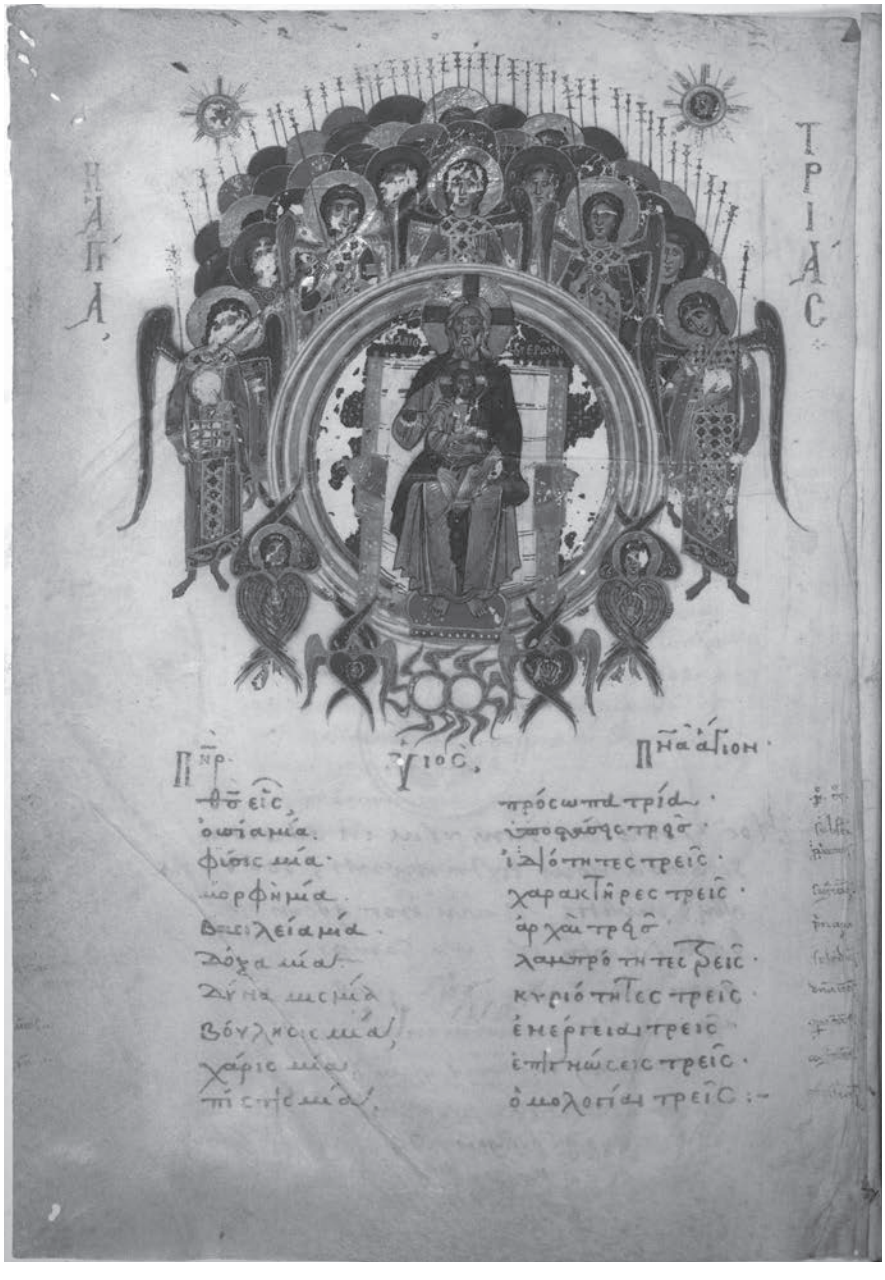
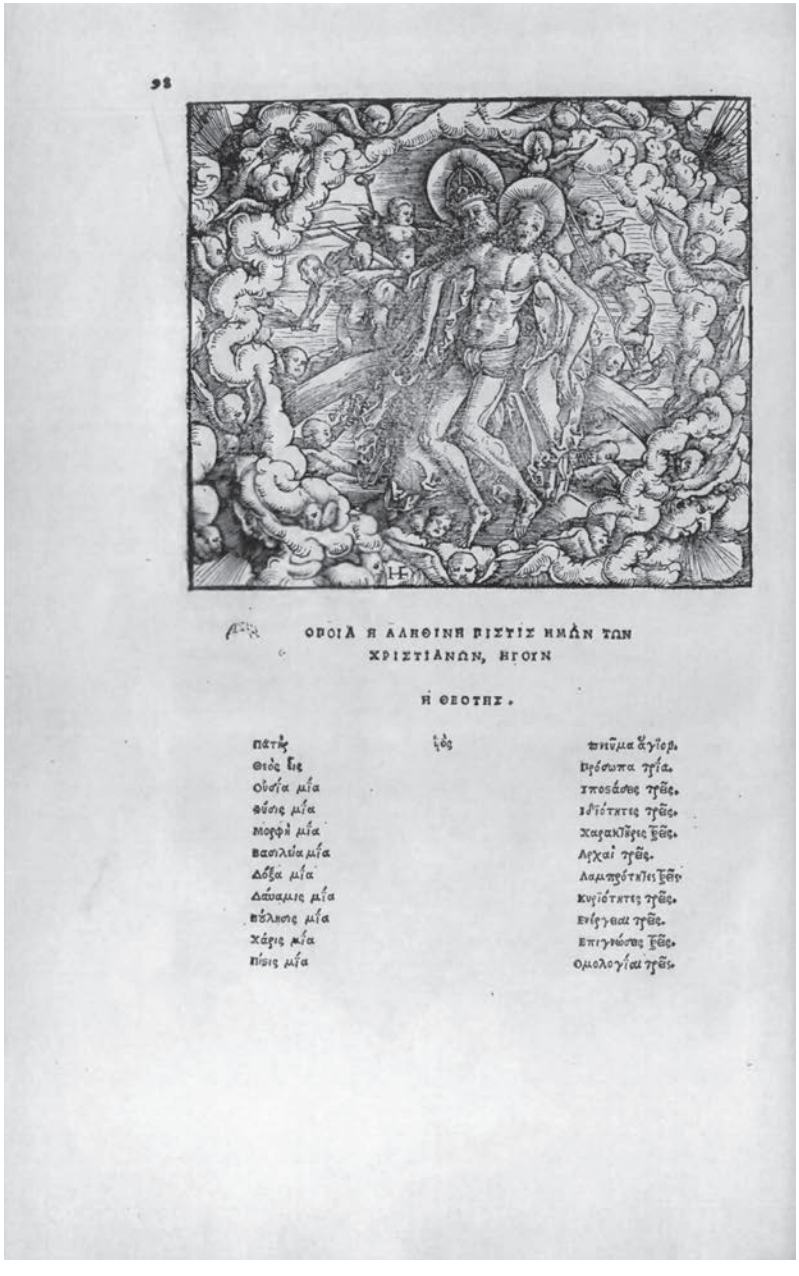
years later the annotation on 1 Cor 7:39 was attacked in a book by Johann Dietenberger, to which Erasmus replied in *Responsio ad disputationem de divortio*, for which see CWE 83 152–77.

572 See the appendix to this chapter for a summary of the *1519* annotation on 1 Cor 7:39. The annotation was still further greatly extended in subsequent editions; for a summary of the annotation in its final state see the colloquy 'Marriage' CWE 39 321–3 n16.




The frontispiece of the Corsendonck manuscript with the image of the Trinity and the list of equivalencies between the One and the Three
Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, Cod. suppl. gr. 52

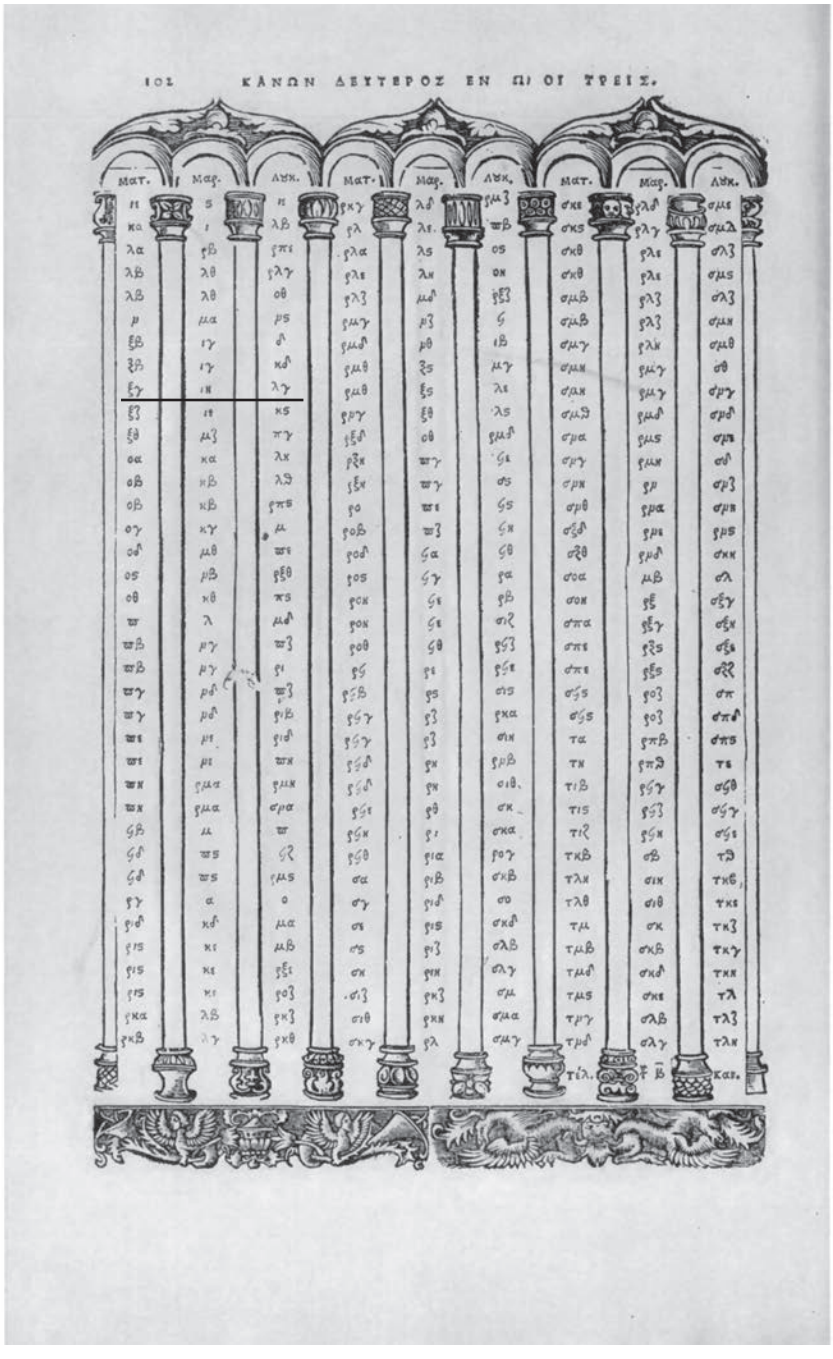
Page following Corsendonck frontispiece, with the Nicene Creed
Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, Cod. suppl. gr. 52



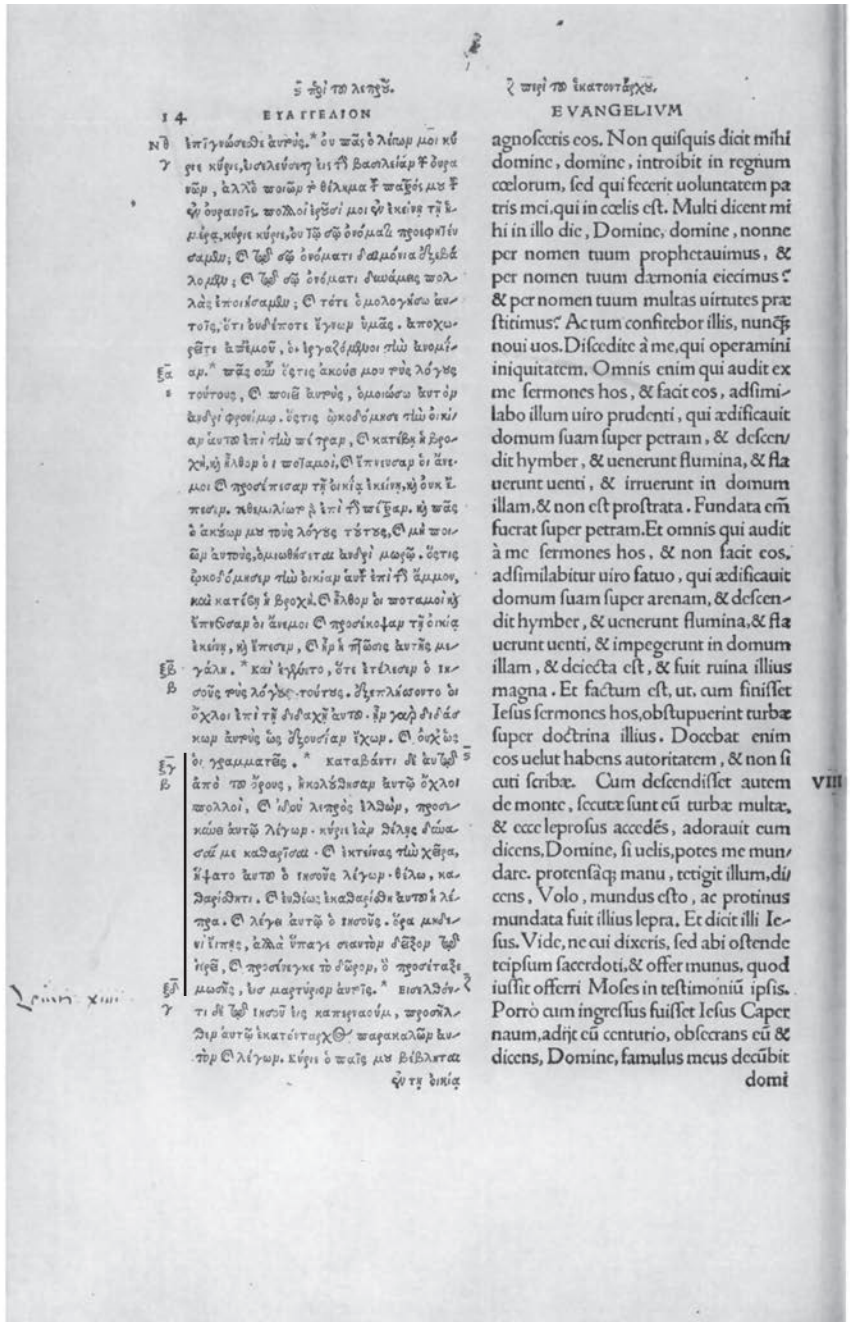

*Novum Testamentum* 1519, page 98,
adaptation of the Corsendonck manuscript: the Trinity and the equivalencies between the One and the Three
The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto

ΠΙΣΤΕΥΩ εἰς ἕνα θεόν, πατέρα παντοκράτορα, ποιητὴν οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς ὁρατῶν τε πάντων καὶ ἀοράτων, καὶ εἰς ἕνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, τὸν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς γεννηθέντα πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων, φῶς ἐκ φωτός, θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, γεννηθέντα, οὐ ποιηθέντα, ὁμοούσιον τῷ πατρί, δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο, τόν τε ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν κατελθόντα ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν, καὶ σαρκωθέντα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου, καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντα, σταυρωθέντά τε ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου, καὶ παθόντα καὶ ταφέντα, καὶ ἀναστάντα τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ κατὰ τὰς γραφάς, καὶ ἀνελθόντα εἰς τοὺς οὐρανούς, καὶ καθιζόμενον ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ πατρός, καὶ πάλιν ἐρχόμενον μετὰ δόξης κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς, οὗ τῆς βασιλείας οὐκ ἔσται τέλος. Καὶ εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τὸ κύριον, τὸ ζωοποιὸν, τὸ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον, τὸ σὺν πατρὶ καὶ υἱῷ συμπροσκυνούμενον, καὶ συνδοξαζόμενον, τὸ λαλῆσαν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν. εἰς μίαν καθολικὴν καὶ ἀποστολικὴν ἐκκλησίαν. ὁμολογῶ ἓν βάπτισμα, εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν. προσδοκῶ ἀνάστασιν νεκρῶν, καὶ ζωὴν τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος. ἀμήν.

*Novum Testamentum* 1519, page 99,
adaptation of the Corsendonck manuscript: the Nicene Creed,
following illustration of Trinity
The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto




*Novum Testamentum* 1519, the Eusebian Canon, table 2
The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto



*Novum Testamentum* 1519, Gospel of Matthew, story of the leper (8:1–4 marked)
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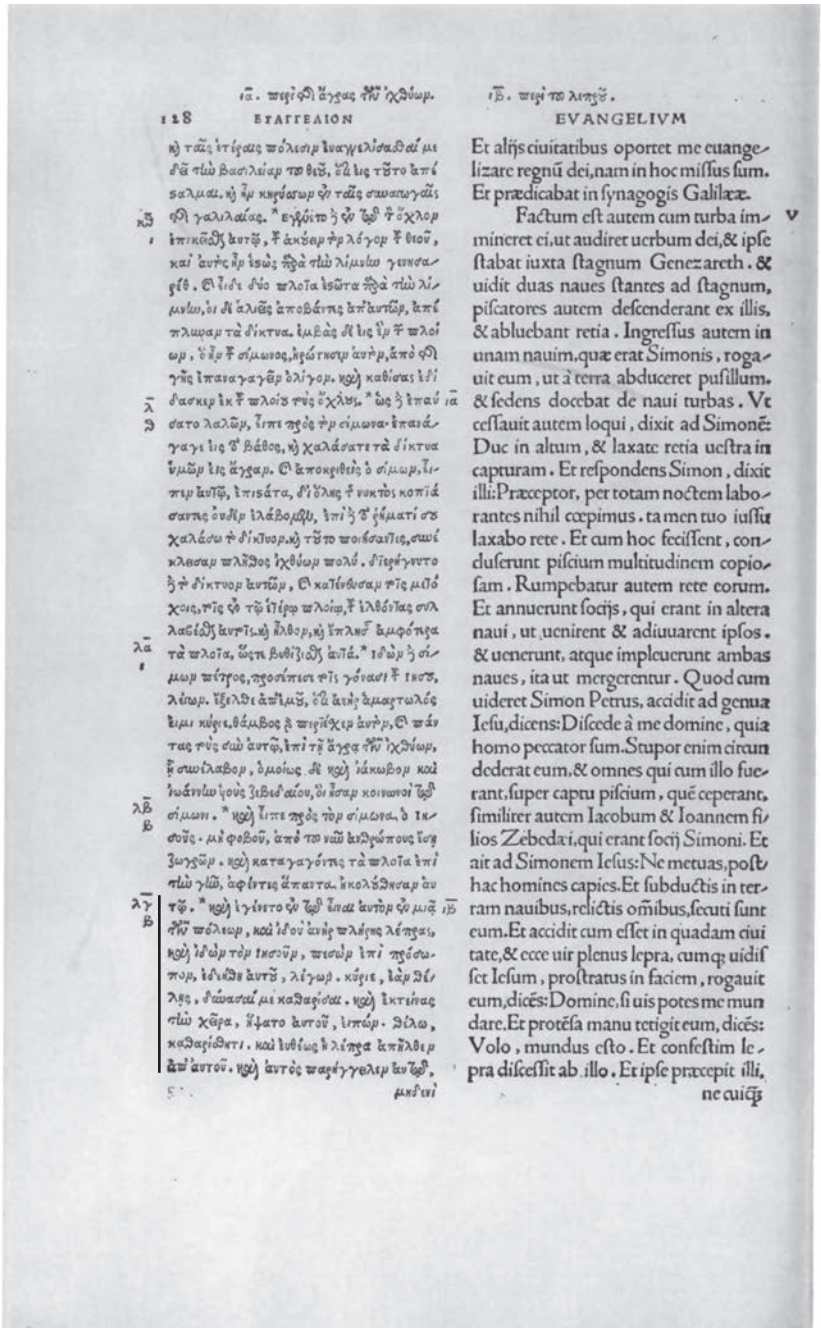
φιμώθητι καὶ ἔξελθε ἐξ αὐτ͞ου· καὶ σπαράξαν
αὐτὸν τ̀ πνεῦμα τ̀ ἀκάθαρτον, φων͞ησάν φω
νῇ μεγάλῃ, ἐξῆλθεν ἐξ αὐτ͞ου. καὶ ἐθαμβήθη
σαν πάντες, ὥστε συζητεῖν πρὸς ἑαυτούς, λέ
γοντες. τί ἐστι τοῦτο; τίς ἡ διδαχὴ ἡ καινὴ
αὕτη; ὅτι κατ᾽ ἐξουσίαν καὶ τοῖς πνεύμασι
τοῖς ἀκαθάρτοις ἐπιτάσσει, καὶ ὑπακούουσιν αὐ
τῷ. ἐξῆλθε δὲ ἡ ἀκοὴ αὐτοῦ εὐθὺς εἰς ὅλην τὴν
περίχωρον τ͞ης γαλιλαίας. * Καὶ εὐθέως ἐκ τ͞ης β
συναγωγ͞ης ἐξελθόντες, ἦλθον εἰς τὴν οἰκί
αν σίμωνος καὶ ἀνδρέου μετὰ ἰακώβου καὶ
ἰωάννου. ἡ δὲ πενθερὰ σίμωνος κατέκειτο πυρέσ
σουσα, καὶ εὐθέως λέγουσιν αὐτῷ περὶ αὐ
τ͞ης. καὶ προσελθὼν ἤγειρεν αὐτὴν, κρατή
σας τ͞ης χειρὸς αὐτ͞ης, καὶ ἀφῆκεν αὐτὴν ὁ πυ
ρετὸς εὐθέως, καὶ διηκόνει αὐτοῖς· ὀψίας δὲ γε γ
νομένης, ὅτε ἔδυ ὁ ἥλιος, ἔφερον πρὸς αὐ
τὸν πάντας τοὺς κακῶς ἔχοντας, καὶ τοὺς δαι
μονιζομένους. καὶ ἦν ὅλη ἡ πόλις ἐπισυνηγμέ
νη ἐπὶ τ͞ης θύρας, καὶ ἐθεράπευσεν πολ
λοὺς κακῶς ἔχοντας ποικίλαις νόσοις, * καὶ δ
δαιμόνια πολλὰ ἐξέβαλεν, καὶ οὐκ ἤφιε
λαλεῖν τὰ δαιμόνια, ὅτι ἤδεισαν αὐτόν.
* καὶ πρωὶ ἔννυχον λίαν ἀναστὰς ἐξῆλθεν, καὶ
ἀπῆλθεν εἰς ἔρημον τόπον, κἀ
κεῖ προσηύχετο. καὶ κατεδίωξαν αὐτὸν οἱ σί
μων, καὶ οἱ μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ, καὶ εὑρόντες αὐτὸν,
λέγουσιν αὐτῷ. ὅτι πάντες ζητοῦσί σε.
καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς. ἄγωμεν εἰς τὰς ἐχομένας
κωμοπόλεις, ἵνα καὶ ἐκεῖ κηρύξω, εἰς τοῦ
το γὰρ ἐξῆλυθα. Καὶ ἦν κηρύσσων ἐν ταῖς
συναγωγαῖς αὐτ͞ων, εἰς ὅλην τὴν γαλιλαί
αν, καὶ τὰ δαιμόνια ἐκέβαλλεν. * καὶ ἔρχε δ
ται πρὸς αὐτὸν λεπρὸς παρακαλῶν αὐτὸν, καὶ
γονυπετῶν αὐτῷ, καὶ λέγων αὐτῷ. ὅτι ἐὰν
θέλῃς δύνασαί με καθαρίσαι. ὁ δὲ ἰησοῦς
σπλαγχνισθείς, ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα, ἥψατο
αὐτοῦ, καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ. θέλω, καθαρίσθητι. καὶ εὐ
θέως ἀπῆλθεν ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῦ ἡ λέ
πρα, καὶ ἐκαθαρίσθη. καὶ ἐμβριμησάμενος αὐ
τῷ, εὐθέως ἐξέβαλεν αὐτόν. καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ. ὅρα
μηδενὶ

Obmutesce & exi ab homine. Et cum diſcerpſiſſet eum ſpiritus immundus, exclamaſſetq; uoce magna, exijt ab eo. Et obſtupuerunt omnes, ita ut conquirerent inter ſe, dicētes: Quid eſt hoc? Quæ doctrina noua hæc? quia cum autoritate etiam ſpiritibus immundis imperat, & obediunt ei? Emanauit autem fama eius ſtatim in totam undiq; regionem Galilææ finitimam. Et protinus è ſynagoga egreſſi, uenerunt in domum Simonis & Andreæ cum Iacobo & Ioanne. Socrus autem Simonis decumbebat febricitans, & continuo dicunt ei de illa. Et accedens erexit eam, apprehenſa manu eius, & reliquit eam febris ilico, ac miniſtrabat eis. Veſperi uero, cum occidiſſet ſol, afferebant ad eum omnes male habentes, & qui à dæmonijs agitabantur. Et ciuitas tota congregata erat ad hoſtium, & ſanauit multos qui ægrotabant uarijs morbis, & dæmonia multa eijciebat: & non ſinebat loqui dæmonia, quod ipſum noſſent. Et manè multa adhuc nocte cum ſurrexiſſet egreſſus eſt, & abijt Ieſus in deſertū locum, ibiq; orabat. & proſecutus eſt eum Simon, & qui cum illo erant. & cum inueniſſent eum, dicunt ei: Omnes te quærunt. Et ait illis: Eamus in proximos uicos, ut & ibi prædicem: In hoc enim egreſſus ſum. Et prædicabat in ſynagogis eorum, in tota Galilæa, & dæmonia eijciebat. Et uenit ad eum leproſus deprecans eum, eiq; ad genua accidens, ac dicens illi: Si uis potes me mundare. Ieſus autem miſertus, protenſa manu, tetigit illum, & dicit ei: Volo, mundus eſto. Et cum dixiſſet, ſtatim diſceſſit ab eo lepra, & mundatus eſt: Et comminatus ei, ſtatim emiſit illum, dicitq; ei: Vide

g ne cui

*Novum Testamentum* 1519, Gospel of Mark, story of the leper (1:40–5 marked)
The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto



ια. περὶ τοῦ ἄγγας τὴν ἰχθύων. ιβ. περὶ τοῦ λεπροῦ.



καὶ ταῖς ἑτέραις πόλεσιν εὐαγγελίσασθαί με δεῖ τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο ἀπέσταλμαι. καὶ ἦν κηρύσσων ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς τῆς γαλιλαίας. * εγένετο δὲ ἐν τῷ τὸν ὄχλον ἐπικεῖσθαι αὐτῷ, καὶ ἀκούειν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ αὐτὸς ἦν ἑστὼς παρὰ τὴν λίμνην γεννησαρέθ. καὶ εἶδε δύο πλοῖα ἑστῶτα παρὰ τὴν λίμνην, οἱ δὲ ἁλιεῖς ἀποβάντες ἀπ' αὐτῶν, ἔπλυνον τὰ δίκτυα. ἐμβὰς δὲ εἰς ἓν τῶν πλοίων, ὃ ἦν τοῦ σίμωνος, ἠρώτησεν αὐτὸν, ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἐπαναγαγεῖν ὀλίγον. καὶ καθίσας ἐδίδασκεν ἐκ τοῦ πλοίου τοὺς ὄχλους. * ὡς δὲ ἐπαύσατο λαλῶν, εἶπε πρὸς τὸν σίμωνα· ἐπαναγαγε εἰς τὸ βάθος, καὶ χαλάσατε τὰ δίκτυα ὑμῶν εἰς ἄγραν. καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς ὁ σίμων, εἶπεν αὐτῷ, ἐπιστάτα, δι' ὅλης τῆς νυκτὸς κοπιάσαντες οὐδὲν ἐλάβομεν, ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ ῥήματί σου χαλάσω τὰ δίκτυον. καὶ τοῦτο ποιήσαντες, συνέκλεισαν πλῆθος ἰχθύων πολύ. διερήγνυτο δὲ τὸ δίκτυον αὐτῶν, καὶ κατένευσαν τοῖς μετόχοις τοῖς ἐν τῷ ἑτέρῳ πλοίῳ, τοῦ ἐλθόντας συλλαβέσθαι αὐτοῖς. καὶ ἦλθον, καὶ ἔπλησαν ἀμφότερα τὰ πλοῖα, ὥστε βυθίζεσθαι αὐτά. * ἰδὼν δὲ σίμων πέτρος, προσέπεσε τοῖς γόνασι τοῦ ἰησοῦ, λέγων. ἔξελθε ἀπ' ἐμοῦ, ὅτι ἀνὴρ ἁμαρτωλός εἰμι κύριε. θάμβος γὰρ περιέσχεν αὐτὸν, καὶ πάντας τοὺς σὺν αὐτῷ, ἐπὶ τῇ ἄγρᾳ τῶν ἰχθύων, ἣν συνέλαβον, ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ ἰάκωβον καὶ ἰωάννην υἱοὺς ζεβεδαίου, οἳ ἦσαν κοινωνοὶ τῷ σίμωνι. * καὶ εἶπε πρὸς τὸν σίμωνα, ὁ ἰησοῦς· μὴ φοβοῦ, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν ἀνθρώπους ἔσῃ ζωγρῶν. καὶ καταγαγόντες τὰ πλοῖα ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, ἀφέντες ἅπαντα, ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῷ. * καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ εἶναι αὐτὸν ἐν μιᾷ τῶν πόλεων, καὶ ἰδοὺ ἀνὴρ πλήρης λέπρας, καὶ ἰδὼν τὸν ἰησοῦν, πεσὼν ἐπὶ πρόσωπον, ἐδεήθη αὐτοῦ, λέγων. κύριε, ἐὰν θέλῃς, δύνασαί με καθαρίσαι. καὶ ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα, ἥψατο αὐτοῦ, εἰπών. θέλω, καθαρίσθητι. καὶ εὐθέως ἡ λέπρα ἀπῆλθεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ. καὶ αὐτὸς παρήγγειλεν αὐτῷ,

μηδενὶ

Et alijs ciuitatibus oportet me euangelizare regnũ dei, nam in hoc missus sum. Et prædicabat in synagogis Galilææ.

Factum est autem cum turba imv mineret ei, ut audiret uerbum dei, & ipse stabat iuxta stagnum Genezareth. & uidit duas naues stantes ad stagnum, piscatores autem descenderant ex illis, & abluebant retia. Ingressus autem in unam nauim, quæ erat Simonis, rogauit eum, ut à terra abduceret pusillum. & sedens docebat de naui turbas. Vt cessauit autem loqui, dixit ad Simonẽ: Duc in altum, & laxate retia uestra in capturam. Et respondens Simon, dixit illi: Præceptor, per totam noctem laborantes nihil cœpimus. ta men tuo iussu laxabo rete. Et cum hoc fecissent, conduserunt piscium multitudinem copiosam. Rumpebatur autem rete eorum. Et annuerunt socijs, qui erant in altera naui, ut uenirent & adiuuarent ipsos. & uenerunt, atque impleuerunt ambas naues, ita ut mergerentur. Quod cum uideret Simon Petrus, accidit ad genua Iesu, dicens: Discede à me domine, quia homo peccator sum. Stupor enim circumdederat eum, & omnes qui cum illo fuerant, super captu piscium, quẽ ceperant, similiter autem Iacobum & Ioannem filios Zebedæi, qui erant socij Simoni. Et ait ad Simonem Iesus: Ne metuas, posthac homines capies. Et subductis in terram nauibus, relictis omnibus, secuti sunt eum. Et accidit cum esset in quadam ciuitate, & ecce uir plenus lepra, cumq; uidisset Iesum, prostratus in faciem, rogauit eum, dicẽs: Domine, si uis potes me mundare. Et protẽsa manu tetigit eum, dicẽs: Volo, mundus esto. Et confestim lepra discessit ab illo. Et ipse præcepit illi, ne cuiq;

*Novum Testamentum* 1519, Gospel of Luke, story of the leper (5:12–16 marked)
The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto

Turning to the illustration on page 145 (text of Mark, page 73), note the letter designation near the bottom, *ικ* in the left margin with *β* printed immediately below it.

Turning to the illustration on page 146 (text of Luke, page 128), note the letter designation again near the bottom, *λγ* in the left margin with *β* printed immediately below it.

Note that in each case the Eusebian chapter number is placed in the marginal space between the Greek and Latin columns and appears again in the top margin immediately before the chapter caption. Thus one could begin by consulting the chapter index to find the story of the leper, noting that the Matthean version is on page 14, locate it there, then turn to the tables to find the parallels. Chapter numbers with captions are illustrated on page 978.

## Appendix III

*Analysis of the Annotation on 1 Corinthians 7:39 in Its 1519 Form*[573]

*Liberata est a lege, cui autem vult, nubat:* '[if the husband dies] she is free to be married to whom she wishes [only in the Lord]'

Erasmus begins with a brief *captatio benevolentiae* appropriate to a rhetorical work: he has no desire to be contentious; he simply offers a point of view for the discussion of scholars. He recognizes that others may be more richly endowed with learning and wisdom than he, and he is willing to change his mind if anyone, even though unlearned, can convincingly instruct otherwise. The *propositio* follows, setting out clearly the issue at hand: first, whether it is expedient, and if so, whether it is permitted to dissolve a marriage for weighty reasons and only by prelates or legitimate judges; and second, whether the divorcee, either man or woman, is permitted to remarry.

The heart of Erasmus' argument lies in the discussion of scriptural passages – statements that come from the lips of Christ in Matthew and those that come from the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians. But Erasmus follows ancient rhetorical practice in a preliminary *praemunitio*, eliminating from the field of debate fundamental difficulties that stand in the way of the author proceeding to the central argument. Thus, first, Erasmus turns to the records of early Christianity to show from the evidence of Origen, Augustine, and Jerome that in the first centuries of our era remarriage of both partners was

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573 For significant additions in *1522* see 'New Testament Scholarship' 208 with n807.

permitted and practised; his proposals cannot therefore be discounted as novel. Second, Erasmus appeals to 'natural law,' that is, to our sense of fairness, to set aside doubts that his proposals must necessarily be found to be ill-conceived. Finally, Erasmus discounts the argument that what is right is always and everywhere right by showing how the church has disregarded the pronouncements of popes, councils, and even Scripture in forming its sense of what is right for a particular time and circumstance.

Erasmus is now ready to approach Scripture. He takes the crucial passages in canonical order. He notes that ecclesiastical regulations restrict divorce far more than the single exception of Matthew 5:32 (adultery) requires, and he suggests that if we 'interpret' the Matthean contextual prohibitions (swearing, revenge, retaliation) to accommodate human weakness, we should similarly 'interpret' the saying on divorce. Just as Moses made a concession to the 'hardness of heart,' so the church should accommodate the vast multitude who are less than 'perfect.'[574]

The allusion to Moses brings the discussion to the next crucial passage: Matthew 19:1–9. Erasmus proceeds along lines familiar from classical rhetoric, first applying the argument from definition, then examining the causes, that is, the reasons given for the indissolubility of marriage. Marriage is, by definition, a physical union of man and woman, a union that fornication breaks apart, thus explaining the 'exception' of Matthew 5:31. (The definition would become the object of bitter attacks by the Paris theologians.) But the expression 'What God has joined together' also has a definitional implication, as it must mean 'What God has *rightly* joined together.' This definition would exclude the many hasty and unwise marriages of the times. Further, the divorce of which Jesus speaks is not the kind of divorce of which the contemporary church speaks, carrying the implication of no second marriage. Erasmus now turns to 'cause,' that is, the reasons given for not permitting divorce. Perhaps the most significant of these is the claim that marriage is a sacrament, in which the indissoluble love of Christ for the church is lived out in the union of two people. To this Erasmus replies that a type is not to be applied in every respect. He also counters some slippery-slope arguments, for example, that if the church allowed divorce and remarriage on the grounds of the 'heresy' of one partner, people would pretend heresy to obtain an easy divorce.

Erasmus turns now to the Pauline Epistles. He begins with Romans 7:1–6 and applies again the hermeneutical principle he has just used in the

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574 On this 'principle of accommodation' see *Ratio* 533–8.

discussion on types: in these verses we have a similitude, but there is no question here of divorce. There remains only 1 Corinthians 7. Erasmus considers first the easier passage 7:38–40, explicitly applying again an important exegetical principle: that one must consider the circumstances in which a statement is made. In this case Paul's preference (and it is a preference, not a command) for refusing a second marriage is due to the 'condition of the times,' that is, the expectation of the speedy return of Christ. Finally, Erasmus faces those difficult words of 7:8–12 demanding that a divorced woman remain unmarried or return to her husband (7:11). The close analysis of these verses is followed by an imaginative leap beyond the text and into the world of the sixteenth century: if Paul had seen the terrible marriages of the present day, if he could have seen the trickery and deceit that led to such marriages, he would have treated the whole subject of marriage more generously.

In his conclusion Erasmus explains again his position in writing this 'little book.' He does not wish to open a window for easy divorce; he wishes rather to take thought for the unfortunate and the weak. He points briefly to the absurdity of the church's current position but promises to conform to ecclesiastical authority.

## V THE *PARAPHRASES* ON THE APOSTOLIC EPISTLES (1518–21)

Within days of the publication of the *Paraphrase on Romans* in November 1517, Erasmus indicated that 'perchance' he would paraphrase the 'other Epistles.'[575] Several months later, in April 1518 just before leaving for Basel, he wrote to Cardinal Grimani, the dedicatee of the Romans *Paraphrase*, that he was being encouraged to make a 'similar exposition of the other Epistles.'[576] Erasmus arrived in Basel in May, and during the summer and early autumn of 1518 was heavily engaged in the preparation and publication of the second edition of his New Testament. After his return to Louvain, even while he was completing the final pages of this edition, he was already preparing

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575 Cf Ep 720:14–16 (November 1517). Indeed, we should recall that already in the spring of 1517, several months before the *Paraphrase on Romans* was published, Erasmus had apparently considered a *Paraphrase* on the apostolic Epistles; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 88 with n364.

576 Ep 835:10–13

to 'attack the paraphrases of the remainder' of the apostolic Epistles.[577] He turned first in late 1518 to the two Epistles to the Corinthians, and by early 1521 he had completed the *Paraphrases* on all the apostolic Epistles, finishing with the *Paraphrase on Hebrews*. These *Paraphrases* were among his most important literary achievements during this period of more than two years, and we may be surprised, given Erasmus' customary speed of composition, that the task extended over so many months.[578] It was, however, for Erasmus a time of intense involvement in a wide sphere of varied activities.

## The Composition of the Paraphrases on the Apostolic Epistles in the Context of Erasmus' Life

### *Erasmus and the Court*

Just when Erasmus was completing the *Paraphrases* on the two Corinthian Epistles,[579] an event occurred that was to have enormous implications for the political development of Europe: the emperor Maximilian died on 12 January 1519. His death necessitated the election and coronation of a successor. The election took place in Frankfurt on 28 June 1519. Richard Pace, with whom Erasmus had a long-standing friendship, was the English

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577 Cf Epp 891:23 (23 October 1518) and 889:41–2. For the final work on the second edition of the New Testament see Ep 886:18–20 (22 October 1518).

578 There were several other noteworthy literary productions during this time, which in themselves and apart from associated controversy, were unlikely to have delayed seriously his work on the *Paraphrases*: several *Apologiae*, published in 1519 and 1520; the *Antibarbari*, published in 1520, a revision of earlier work (cf 6 with n17); and the *Opera omnia* of Cyprian (1520), which was, however, only lightly annotated. For the *Encomium matrimonii* see 'New Testament Scholarship' n605 below.

579 In 1519 the *Paraphrases* on the two Epistles were printed as a single work, hence the singular 'Paraphrase' on the title page: *The Paraphrase on the Two Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians Freshly Composed by Erasmus of Rotterdam Printed Now for the First Time, to the Glory of Christ and Paul*. Within this edition, however, the text gives each *Paraphrase* its own title in the singular. This model was followed for the *Paraphrases* on the three Johannine Epistles. In all other sets of *Paraphrases* (Ephesians–2 Thessalonians, 1 Timothy–Philemon, 1–2 Peter and Jude) the plural was used on the title page of the original edition to designate the set, while within the set the singular was used to designate the individual *Paraphrase*; this became standard for the subsequent collected editions, beginning in 1521 with *Paraphrases in omnes epistolas Pauli germanas et in omnes canonicas …*

representative at the election. Erasmus met Pace twice at Antwerp, first when Pace was en route to the election in May and again when he was returning from it in July. It was an opportunity for Erasmus to make his case against Edward Lee to an Englishman of high esteem and to discuss his hopes for patronage in England.[580] Charles was elected and more than a year later, on 23 October 1520, was crowned in Aachen.[581] Preceding the coronation, high-level diplomatic meetings took place at Calais between Charles and Francis on 7–24 June, and between Charles and Henry VIII on 10–14 July. As a councillor of Charles, Erasmus was expected to be present at both meetings. Sickness apparently prevented his appearance at the first meeting, but he was present for the second and then followed the court to Bruges, where he remained until nearly the end of July 1520. He was in Antwerp in late September, when the court visited that city, and was present with the court in Louvain in early October.[582] He did not attend the coronation in Aachen; but the court had gone to Cologne after the coronation, and Erasmus spent at least three weeks with the court there.[583] If the election and coronation were diversionary for Erasmus, his association with the court may, nevertheless, have been an advantage to his work as a paraphrast.

### *Erasmus and Edward Lee*

From the autumn of 1518, when Erasmus returned to Louvain from Basel, to the summer of 1520, when the kings met at Calais, Erasmus was preoccupied with his quarrel with Edward Lee. On his return to Louvain, Erasmus learned that Lee had circulated some two hundred notes to a few monasteries and some friends in England, and he began at once to make every effort to get possession of a copy of the notes. His efforts proving unfruitful, he apparently urged Lee to publish. In the spring of 1519 Lee did in fact make two attempts to publish with the Hillen firm in Antwerp, but, according to Lee, interference from Erasmus on both occasions caused the negotiations

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580 Cf Epp 968 and 999 introductions; also Epp 996:22–4, 937:40–7; and 'New Testament Scholarship' 22 with nn124, 125.

581 Charles was crowned 'king of the Romans' at this time; it was not until 1530 that he was crowned 'Holy Roman emperor' by Pope Clement VII. Cf Ep 1155 introduction.

582 Cf Ep 1155 introduction, and also (for Antwerp) Ep 1146 introduction.

583 Cf Ep 1155 introduction.

to fail.[584] English friends had encouraged Lee to make overtures for peace, but the overtures were not successful.[585] By October 1519, Lee had found himself lampooned not only in Erasmus' *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* (published late March) but also in Wilhelm Nesen's *Dialogus bilinguium ac trilinguium*; and in a letter of July 15, one of the last to be published in the *Farrago* (October 1519), Lee was openly challenged by Erasmus to publish his notes.[586] Lee now determined to publish. Once again he approached Michaël Hillen in Antwerp, who evidently contracted about 6 November to begin at once to print Lee's book. Hillen reneged, however, in order to undertake at precisely that time the publication of Erasmus' *Paraphrases* on 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. Lee regarded this as a deliberate attempt on the part of Erasmus to forestall the publication of his notes and took his work to Paris, where it was published by Gourmont in early February 1520.[587] The affair with Lee was undoubtedly one of the difficulties Erasmus had in mind when he complained that trouble in Louvain had delayed the completion of his *Paraphrase on Galatians*.[588] When Erasmus first heard of Lee's publication, he may have decided not to reply personally but to leave a response to others.[589] He could not, however, overcome his feeling of intense anxiety. He was now describing Lee in such terms as 'this three-halfpenny booby' and 'a dark particular Satan,'[590] and by the end of February he was composing a reply.[591]

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584 For a fuller account of the events see CWE 72 xvi–xvii. For Lee's version of events see Ep 1061:620–705; and for the dates (c March to c early June 1519), Ep 1061 nn71 and 75.

585 Cf Ep 936:99–107.

586 Cf Epp 998 and 1061:776. For the *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* see CWE 71 83 with n60. For Nesen's *Dialogus bilinguium ac trilinguium* 'Dialogue of the Two-tongued and the Trilinguals' see CWE 7 343; the *Dialogus* was in circulation by the late summer of 1519, ibidem 330. For Lee's report of Erasmus' mocking allusions to him in Martens' 1519 edition of the *Colloquies* see Ep 1061:374–430 and the Translator's Note to 'Errors in the Vulgate' 867–8 with n5.

587 For the negotiations with Hillen see Ep 1061:706–47. For the date of publication of Lee's *Annotationes in annotationes Novi Testamenti Desiderii Erasmi* see Epp 1037 and 1061 introductions.

588 Cf Ep 952:19–22. The *Paraphrase* was published in May 1519. Cf nn598 and 605 below.

589 Erasmus had heard of the publication by 17 February (Ep 1066:99). For his first reaction to the news see Epp 1068:18–24 and 1069:6–8. For his expectation that others would respond, an expectation realized, see n586 (Nesen's volume of letters), Ep 1083 introduction, and CWE 7 xi–xii.

590 Epp 1074:141–2 and 1075:15

591 Cf Ep 1072:5–6.

To Lee's account of events he first responded in his *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei*,[592] written rapidly 'in three days' and published in March 1520.[593] This was followed in April by an extensive refutation of Lee's notes in two volumes published in quick succession.[594] Hillen published the three volumes; consequently Erasmus was in Antwerp for much of March and April 1520. Having now exposed Lee and defended himself, Erasmus was willing to follow the long-standing advice of his English friends to make peace with Lee.[595] During the early summer, therefore, Erasmus prepared a new edition that excluded the bitter account of events given by both Lee and Erasmus.[596] Formal reconciliation between the two took place when they met in Calais in July 1520 at the meeting of Charles and Henry.[597] Thus from February to May the quarrel with Lee would once again have been a deterrent to the progress of the *Paraphrases* on the apostolic Epistles.[598]

### *Erasmus and the Louvain Faculty of Theology*

Erasmus believed that the attacks of Lee were part of a conspiracy by the enemies of 'the humanities and classical theology,' who, 'for the most part, make use of those evangelical characters' (the monks) to destroy humanistic education as a propaedeutic to theology.[599] Thus the dispute with Lee was not, in Erasmus' view, separable from the larger issue of Erasmus' relation to the faculty of theology at the University of Louvain, a relation complicated

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592 *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* responded to the events as reported in Ep 1061.

593 Cf Epp 1072:5–6 and 1080 introduction.

594 Cf Epp 1080 introduction, 1092:15, and 1097 n6.

595 Cf Ep 1026 n3.

596 That is, it excluded Ep 1061 and Erasmus' *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei*. The edition included Erasmus' *Responsio ad annotationes Lei*, the volume of letters edited earlier by Wilhelm Nesen (in effect as an attack on Lee), and Lee's *Annotationes in annotationes Novi Testamenti Desiderii Erasmi* (cf Ep 1100 introduction). The new edition, published by Froben, has two colophon dates: May 1520 for Lee's *Annotationes*, August 1520 for Erasmus' *Responsio* (ASD IX-4 15). Erasmus took the opportunity to publish here also the *Apologia de 'In principio erat sermo'* (August 1520, an enlarged version of the original edition published in February), placing it immediately after the *Responsio ad annotationes Lei*; cf n616 below.

597 Cf Ep 1100 introduction.

598 Cf Erasmus' complaint in 1519, 152 with n588 just above.

599 Ep 1053:425–6, 440

on the one hand by his commitment to the Collegium Trilingue[600] and on the other by his ambiguous support for Martin Luther, who set Europe on edge during a period of time that coincided almost exactly with Erasmus' attempt to complete the *Paraphrases* on the apostolic Epistles.[601]

The place of the humanities, particularly the biblical languages, in a theological education, became a sharply focused issue in the spring of 1519. Early in March, an apparent devotee of Erasmus, Alaard of Amsterdam, announced his intention of lecturing, under the auspices of the Collegium Trilingue, on Erasmus' *Ratio*, recently published as an independent work.[602] As Alaard had no licence to lecture, the university refused permission.[603] In the wake of this event Jacobus Latomus published a refutation of the principle, so central to the *Ratio*, that a knowledge of the languages was essential to a theologian. Although the overt object of his attack was a publication by Petrus Mosellanus of Leipzig, an advocate of the languages, Erasmus believed, no doubt correctly, that his own *Ratio* was quite deliberately, even if indirectly, under attack[604] and responded quickly with his *Apologia contra*

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600 For Erasmus'early efforts on behalf of the Collegium Trilingue see 'New Testament Scholarship' 97 with n391; for a fuller account of his contribution to the establishment of the *Collegium* see CWE 71 xix–xxiii and 32–6.

601 Froben published Luther's book on indulgences in November 1518; 'articles' selected from Luther's works were condemned by the faculty of theology of the University of Louvain in November 1519; the papal bull condemning Luther was dated June 1520 and published in September 1520; Luther defied the bull in December 1520; he was excommunicated in January 1521, was banished, and his books condemned by the 'Edict of Worms' proclaimed by the emperor on 26 May, the day after the last session of the Diet of Worms (opened on 27 January 1521); cf 157–8 just below. Erasmus composed the *Paraphrases* on the Corinthian Epistles in late 1518; the dedicatory letters to the last of the Epistles to be paraphrased are dated 1521, 6 January (Johannine Epistles, Ep 1179) and 17 January (Hebrews, Ep 1181).

602 Published as an independent work in November 1518 (cf Ep 745 introduction); it was identical to the *Ratio* published as a preface in the second edition (1519) of the New Testament (cf Holborn xv and Ep 976 n18). For Alaard see Epp 433, 485, 676.

603 Cf CEBR I 20.

604 Petrus Mosellanus published his *Oratio de variorum linguarum cognitione paranda* (Lepizig) in 1518; Latomus responded with *De trium linguarum et studii theologici ratione* (Antwerp 1519). Mosellanus' publication, originally delivered as a speech (*Oratio*) promoted instruction in the three biblical languages, Hebrew, Greek and Latin; Latomus' book questioned the value of such linguistic training for budding theologians; cf CWE 71 xxix–xxxiii.

*Latomi dialogum*.[605] Furthermore, about this time the suspicion had become current that Erasmus had helped Luther write his book, recently published by Froben, in which indulgences came under fire.[606] To the detractors of the languages the link between the humanities and heresy seemed obvious. The quarrel with Lee had reached a new pitch in the summer of this year (1519) when Erasmus openly challenged Lee to publish. Hence at this time Erasmus looked upon Lee, liberal studies, and Luther as the flash-points for the hostility of the Louvain theologians towards him,[607] and in mid-August he called upon the pope to impose 'silence upon all contention of this kind.'[608] Happily, a truce with the faculty of theology was negotiated on 13 September.[609]

Within little more than a month, the truce had fallen apart. Erasmus traced the cause to the publication by Mosellanus of the first letter that he, Erasmus, had written to Luther at the end of May.[610] In his letter to Luther, Erasmus had struck out at the 'maniacal theologians' at Louvain who indulged in an 'epidemic paranoia' of suspicion that Erasmus had assisted Luther in his book on indulgences, a suspicion encouraged in the hope that it would give theologians 'an opening to suppress both humane studies … and myself.'[611] He noted that people in England, and even the bishop of Liège, favoured Luther's views, though he, Erasmus, remained uncommitted in the 'hopes of being able to do more for the revival of good literature.'[612] Just at this time (October), the theologians at Louvain were investigating articles

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605 On the controversy with Latomus see Ep 936:39–65; also Ep 952:19–39, in which Erasmus, writing to Jan Becker of Borsele, complained that the 'troubles' of this period interrupted his work on the *Paraphrase on Galatians*, which was not published until May (cf n588). In addition to the controversies noted – the quarrel with Lee, the Alaard affair, and the indirect attack of Latomus – another controversy had arisen in Louvain in late February / early March from a 1518 publication of Erasmus' *Encomium matrimonii*. On the controversy over the *Encomium matrimonii* see Ep 946 introduction, CWE 25 129 with n1.

606 Martin Luther *Ad Leonem x pontificem maximum resolutiones disputationum de virtute indulgentiarum …* (Basel: Froben, October 1518). For the title page see CWE 6 192. On the suspicion see Epp 936:44–6 and 961:36–9.

607 Cf Epp 991:40–92, 993:22–60, 1006:350–74.

608 Cf Ep 1007:118–32.

609 Cf Epp 1022 introduction and 1033:21–31.

610 Cf Ep 1033:28–31 with n5. Erasmus wrote to Luther (Ep 980) in response to a letter Luther had written to him in March (Ep 933). For the publication by Mosellanus of the letter see Ep 948 introduction and Ep 1030 n7.

611 Cf Ep 980:7–10, 13–18.

612 Ep 980:41–4

collected from Luther's Latin writings; the investigation would end with their condemnation on 7 November of the views expressed in the articles. Meanwhile, the theologians were not persuaded that Erasmus remained uncommitted; rather they read his recently published letter to Luther as an affirmation of support.[613]

In the autumn of 1519 the position of the Collegium Trilingue within the university structure continued to require Erasmus' attention. After tense negotiations in the summer of 1519, the university had by an official act approved and chartered the *Collegium* on 20 September, just one week after Erasmus' 'truce' with the theologians on 13 September. But some faculty resisted, and when Wilhelm Nesen announced a private lecture course within the framework of the Collegium Trilingue without obtaining the requisite permission to lecture granted by the university, members of the faculty of arts raised questions about the validity of the act of 20 September. Nesen's private pupils appeared to threaten with acts of retaliation, and the university responded on 1 December by refusing Nesen permission to lecture. Erasmus felt compelled to step in. In the immediate sequel (January–February 1520) the university followed the will of the opponents of the *Collegium* and refused requisite privileges to the *Collegium*, but after further debate, the act of 20 September was affirmed once more.[614] Thus as the year 1519 drew to a close, Erasmus found himself defending the *Collegium*, warding off his enemies in the faculty of theology, writing to Thomas Lupset a preliminary defence of his relations with Lee,[615] and in the midst of all, publishing his *Paraphrases* on the pastoral Epistles.

Erasmus continued to feel beleaguered in the new year of 1520 when he was completing the *Paraphrases* on the set of Pauline Epistles from Ephesians to 2 Thessalonians. A letter from him to Wolsey, dated 1 February, requesting the cardinal to urge the pope to silence his critics, was apparently prompted by criticism in England of the widespread substitution of the Latin *sermo* for

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613 Cf Epp 1033:151–68 and 1030 n7. For the 'poisonous attacks' against Erasmus in late 1519 see Ep 1042.

614 For the events briefly described above see the introductions to Epp 1046 and 1057; for Erasmus' intervention see Epp 1046 (1 December 1519) and 1057 (7 January 1520); and Henry de Vocht *History of the Foundation and the Rise of the Collegium Trilingue Lovaniense 1517–1530* Humanistica Lovaniensia 10–13, 4 vols (Louvain 1951) I 411–12, 445–6, 530–1.

615 For the letter to Lupset see Ep 1053 (13 December), published immediately by Dirk Martens and offered for sale on 14 December. For Lupset's role in the quarrel with Lee see Ep 1026 with n3.

the Vulgate's *verbum* in his *1519* translation. By the end of February 1520 he had published his formal response to this criticism.[616] As we have just seen, in January and February the position of the Collegium Trilingue in the university remained very problematic. Erasmus wrote to Budé on 17 February that 'the performance which is staged here endlessly by a body of conspirators opposed to the College of the Three Tongues and to humane studies as a whole is something so disgraceful and so tedious that I cannot describe it to you …'[617] Although the university had officially admitted the Collegium Trilingue on 12 March 1520,[618] opposition to it remained. Later in the spring Erasmus complained to Juan Luis Vives: 'The leading figures in this university cannot endure the College of the Three Tongues …They cannot endure professors of most unblemished character, pure principles and learning far superior to Fausto's.'[619] Erasmus made a similar complaint to Richard Pace in June apparently of the same year.[620]

### *Erasmus and Luther*

Throughout 1520, Luther was filling the horizon of churchmen in Europe. In February the Universities of Cologne and Louvain published their 'Condemnation' of Luther,[621] to which Luther replied in March. The papal bull of June 1520 was published in September, giving Luther sixty days to recant, but Luther burned the bull on 10 December and was excommunicated on 3 January 1521. When Erasmus was in Cologne with the royal court during the previous November, he was consulted by Duke Frederick of Saxony, to whose state Luther belonged, and with the help of a friendly Dominican, Johannes Faber, revised a *Consilium* 'a plan' for the solution to the 'Luther

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616 *Apologia de 'In principio erat sermo'* CWE 73 3–40. For the letter to Wolsey see Ep 1060:46–61; for the *Apologia*, Ep 1072 introduction.

617 Ep 1066:70–3

618 Cf just above and n614 with the reference to de Vocht. And for the college's continuing success see 'New Testament Scholarship' 170 with n669.

619 Ep 1104:19–24. Fausto Andrelini, an Italian who had lectured for many years at the University of Paris, had died on 25 February 1518. In his earlier days in Paris Erasmus had enjoyed Fausto's friendship (cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 12 with n66), but after 1511 the friendship 'came to an end,' CEBR I 56; cf Ep 1104:11–18.

620 Cf Ep 1118:13–14 with n3; cf also the introduction, which allows for the possibility of a 1519 date for the letter.

621 Cf Ep 1070 n1.

problem.'[622] The Diet of Worms began in January 1521, Luther made his case before the diet in April, his books were condemned in May, and he himself was outlawed on 26 May immediately after the diet.

In Louvain the suspicion of Erasmus' collusion with Luther intensified. Writing in September 1520 to Francesco Chierigati, papal diplomat, Erasmus observed that those who write against Luther hate him, Erasmus, more than Luther, 'because I support the humanities … because I recall theologians to their sources, and because I point out to them where true religion has its roots.' In the same letter he describes incidents that occurred after the bull was published, and in which 'a natural booby,' 'a Dominican gang,' and a bishop 'blear-eyed with drink' all denounced him in public. The bishop, suffragan of Tournai, a 'buffoon of a bishop,' when challenged to back up his charges of heresy with citations from Erasmus' work, admitted: 'I have not read Erasmus' books … I meant to read the *Paraphrases*, but the Latin was most lofty, so I am afraid he may be able to slip into some heresy, with all that lofty Latin.'[623] Particularly objectionable was Nicolaas Baechem whose public statements associated Erasmus with the heresies of Luther. On one occasion Baechem added 'a petty postscript': 'These men too … will come to the stake one day unless they desist.'[624] And in October Baechem began a series of lectures on Paul and prayed that 'we might one day see the conversion of Luther and Erasmus.'[625] Indeed Erasmus felt himself so endangered that when he was with the court in Cologne in November, he refused to dine with Girolamo Aleandro, the papal nuncio, for fear of poisoning.[626] Such was the environment in which the last of the *Paraphrases* on the apostolic Epistles were written.

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622 For the *Consilium* see CWE 71 98–100, 108–12, and for the context see ibidem xliii–xlvi; for the *Consilium* as the joint effort of Erasmus and Faber see Ep 1149 introduction. For subsequent developments see 'New Testament Scholarship' 217–18 with n856 (Edict of Worms).

623 All quotations from Ep 1144:20–3, 24–46, 50–4; cf also Ep 1212:9–23. The story of the suffragan is repeated in Ep 1212:9–23, where the bishop's statement is again recorded, though in slightly different language.

624 Cf Ep 1153:78–103.

625 Cf Ep 1164:66–8 with n14 and Ep 1173:130–6. For his part, Erasmus in 1520 spoke provocatively of the Louvain theologians as 'mateologians,' ie empty talkers, directing the expression specifically against Baechem; cf the *1520* addition to the *Ratio* 705 with n1117.

626 Cf Epp 1167 n20 and 1188:35–42, letters dated respectively 6 December 1520 and c March 1521.

*The Paraphrases on the Apostolic Epistles Completed*

The *Paraphrases* on the Epistles of Paul – initiated with Romans in 1517, then begun again in late 1518 with the letters to the Corinthians – were completed in early 1520 with a single publication containing the *Paraphrases* from Ephesians to 2 Thessalonians. Then in the spring of 1520 Erasmus undertook to paraphrase the two Peters and Jude, eager to offer his work as a pleasing gift to Cardinal Wolsey, the intended dedicatee. Indeed, he had hoped to be able to hand the work personally to the cardinal at the meeting between Charles and Henry at Calais in July; regrettably, the cardinal was too busy to meet Erasmus. With the encouragement of Cardinal Schiner, he began work on the *Paraphrase* on James, which he completed in the autumn of 1520, and at the beginning of 1521 he wrote the dedicatory letters for the *Paraphrases* on the three Johns. That he turned to Hebrews last of all perhaps reflects his recognition of the anonymity of the author of the Epistle. He dedicated the *Paraphrase* to Silvestro Gigli, honouring finally the good services the bishop had done him in 1516–17 to secure his dispensation. All these *Paraphrases* were composed in the midst of the dramatic events leading to the condemnation and defection of Luther.

**The Paraphrases on the Apostolic Epistles: The Dedicatory Letters**

Except for the *Paraphrases* on Galatians and Hebrews, the *Paraphrases* were always accompanied in publication with letters of dedication;[627] these letters should not, therefore, be disregarded in a general consideration of Erasmus' New Testament scholarship. After Erasmus arrived in Louvain in July 1517, he began to cultivate relationships with three prince-bishops of Germany and the Netherlands: Philip of Burgundy, prince-bishop of Utrecht since the spring of 1517 and Erasmus' 'own bishop';[628] Erard de la Marck, since 1505 prince-bishop of Liège, whose ecclesiastical authority 'extended … as far as Louvain';[629] and Albert of Brandenburg, elected archbishop-elector of Mainz in 1514, who received the cardinal's hat on 1 August 1518, a prince-bishop

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627 In the case of the *Paraphrases* on Galatians and Hebrews, dedicatory letters accompanied early editions but were later omitted – from Galatians beginning in 1523, from Hebrews beginning in 1532; cf Epp 956 and 1181 introductions.

628 Philip, elected 18 March 1517, entered Utrecht on 19 May (CEBR I 231); Erasmus was, officially, priest in his diocese; cf Ep 1001 n4.

629 Cf CEBR II 383.

whose interest in humanism was well known to Erasmus.[630] Very shortly after Philip's accession to the episcopal seat in Utrecht, Erasmus wrote the *Querela pacis* and dedicated it to him.[631] An invitation from the bishop in later 1517 to meet him clearly pleased Erasmus.[632] Although he neglected to meet his bishop in Mechelen in April 1518, he excused himself by saying that 'there is not a great man anywhere in the world whom I would more sincerely wish to please than Bishop Philip,'[633] and he did meet him in Mechelen in the spring and again in the summer of 1519.[634] Erasmus sought to be known to de la Marck, taking the initiative in December 1517 by sending him a copy of his freshly published *Paraphrase on Romans*,[635] which the bishop clearly enjoyed, and he invited Erasmus to visit.[636] From the dedicatory letter it is clear that Erasmus did meet de la Marck 'for a few days.'[637] In April 1519 Erasmus spoke of both Philip and de la Marck as his 'patrons.'[638] Albert of Brandenburg had in September 1517 expressed admiration for Erasmus' writings, suggested that he compose a book on the lives of the saints, and, like Philip and de la Marck, invited Erasmus to visit him.[639] Erasmus replied in December, declining to write the book on saints but insisting that he had originally intended to dedicate the *Paraphrase on Romans* to Albert.[640] Erasmus frequently spoke of these three prince-bishops in the same breath, not only as men of power but more particularly as men from whom he had received pressing invitations to visit. That he should dedicate compositions to them

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630 Cf CEBR I 184–5 and Epp 871:16–21 (17 October 1518) and 951:13–15 (23 April 1519); for his elevation to the cardinalate see Epp 891:25–9 (23 October 1518) and 893:36–8.

631 Cf the dedicatory letter, Ep 603, which can probably be dated to July 1517, and its introduction.

632 Cf Ep 695:28–30.

633 Ep 812:22–3

634 Cf Epp 952:13–16 and 1001:9–11.

635 Cf Epp 735:3–7 and 738.

636 Cf de la Marck's letter, Ep 746 (December 1517), and the account of Paschasius Berselius: 'The prince … raised your present [the *Paraphrase on Romans*] to his lips several times and uttered the name Erasmus often with delight' Ep 748:23–5.

637 Cf Ep 916:4–9 (5 February 1519); a visit anticipated in September 1518 had to be deferred (Ep 867:88–96).

638 Cf Ep 952:14–15.

639 Cf Ep 661.

640 Cf Ep 745. Indeed, in August Erasmus claimed to have 'had in mind' to dedicate his edition of Suetonius to Albert; cf Ep 631:5–9. There is apparently no evidence that Erasmus ever met Albert.

in 1518 and 1519 should not, therefore, surprise.[641] The *Ratio* (1518) was dedicated to Albert, the *Paraphrase on the Two Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians* to Erard de la Marck early in 1519, and the *Paraphrases* on the pastoral Epistles, 1 Timothy to Philemon, to Philip late in 1519.[642] These letters, like that prefacing the *Paraphrase on Romans*, reflect the historical orientation of the humanist evident, as we have seen, in the annotations.[643]

The dedicatory letter for the *Paraphrase* on the two Corinthian Epistles addressed to de la Marck, at once both a secular and an ecclesiastical ruler, may seem to offer a rather bold critique of Erasmus' contemporary church, and, indeed, Noël Béda would later condemn the letter at various points.[644] The letter is not, however, a preachment but an exposé derived from an examination of the Corinthian church as reflected in the two Epistles and set in comparison with the church historically distanced from the primitive church at two points, the fourth and the sixteenth centuries. The references to the post-Constantinian church, though scattered, serve to highlight the seemingly pervasive will of the Christian community to go astray. The church of both the first and the fourth centuries thus offers points of comparison for the sixteenth-century church in a sweeping description of malignancies detailed as current: the polluted ministers of the Eucharist, the harsh severity of clergy administering penance and the illicit gain from indulgences, the rigorous demands of food laws and fasting, the ambition of clergy, the reliance on armed force. The historical perspective is sharpened and kept vividly before us in the repeated references to time: 'in those early days … but now,' 'at the start,' 'at that time,' 'our own day,' 'during Paul's lifetime,' 'if only today.' This daring critique is, however, dismissed before the letter comes to its conclusion with a stirring and colourful portrait of the Apostle, possibly the most memorable in all Erasmus' writings. Here Erasmus describes the Apostle as a chameleon, a Proteus or Vertumnus, 'a squid,' 'always skilful and slippery.' 'Such is his versatility you would hardly think it is the same man speaking.' Erasmus concludes with an implicit justification of his own work as philologist: 'I am the more amazed at some people who, although

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641 Cf eg Epp 759:2–7, 763:10–12, 809:151–2.

642 Between these two sets of *Paraphrases*, Erasmus composed the *Paraphrase on Galatians*, published in May 1519 and dedicated to Antoine de la Marck, Erard's nephew. The dedication was withdrawn from the *Paraphrase* after 1522; cf n627 above. For the sordid life of Antoine see CWE 42 92n1.

643 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 59–63.

644 The dedicatory letter is Ep 916; cf n637 above. Béda's objections are carefully detailed in the footnotes to the translation of the *Paraphrase* in CWE 43.

they have hardly a smattering of grammar and no idea what it is to write, yet suppose an understanding of Paul's language to be an easy and almost childish thing.'[645]

Erasmus wrote the dedication of the pastoral Epistles for Philip sometime in the last weeks of 1519.[646] Though Erasmus may have originally intended to publish the *Paraphrases* on the Pauline Epistles in their canonical order, the publication of the *Paraphrases* on the pastoral Epistles anticipated by a few weeks that of the *Paraphrases* on the Epistles from Ephesians to 2 Thessalonians, perhaps primarily because, of the three regional prince-bishops, Philip still had no dedication from Erasmus' New Testament work, and the idealized portrait of episcopacy in Timothy and Titus was especially appropriate for a bishop to whom Erasmus himself owed obedience. It is a brief letter, remarkably different from that to the prince-bishop of Liège, though, for all its brevity, it does insist on the same historical perspective, contrasting the task of a bishop in primitive Christianity with that of a prince-bishop in the sixteenth century. But the letter is not a critique of contemporary Christianity; rather, within its short extent it permits Erasmus to assume the role of counsellor to his bishop, acknowledging that the bishop who is both a secular and ecclesiastical ruler has a more difficult task than the bishop of an early Christian community. Erasmus projects himself as a sympathetic counsellor and recalls the image of the circle in the *Ratio* in recognizing that a bishop must sometimes accommodate: 'The cross-currents of human affairs do not always allow a prelate what he may judge the best result.' Still, he must 'keep Paul's pattern as a target always before his eyes,' and although forced at times to deviate from the true course, he 'will never take his eyes from the pole-star.' A bishop may not be able 'to keep level with Paul,' but he should 'follow him as best he can!'[647]

Located in time between the two dedications to two prince-bishops, the dedication of the *Paraphrase on Galatians* in May 1519 to Erard de la Marck's nephew Antoine seems to have been a hasty and ill-advised decision, based on the hope of a promise from Antoine that was never fulfilled.[648] The dedication is very brief and, at first blush, seems to suggest that the subject of the Epistle is almost irrelevant to the sixteenth century – the subject, Erasmus

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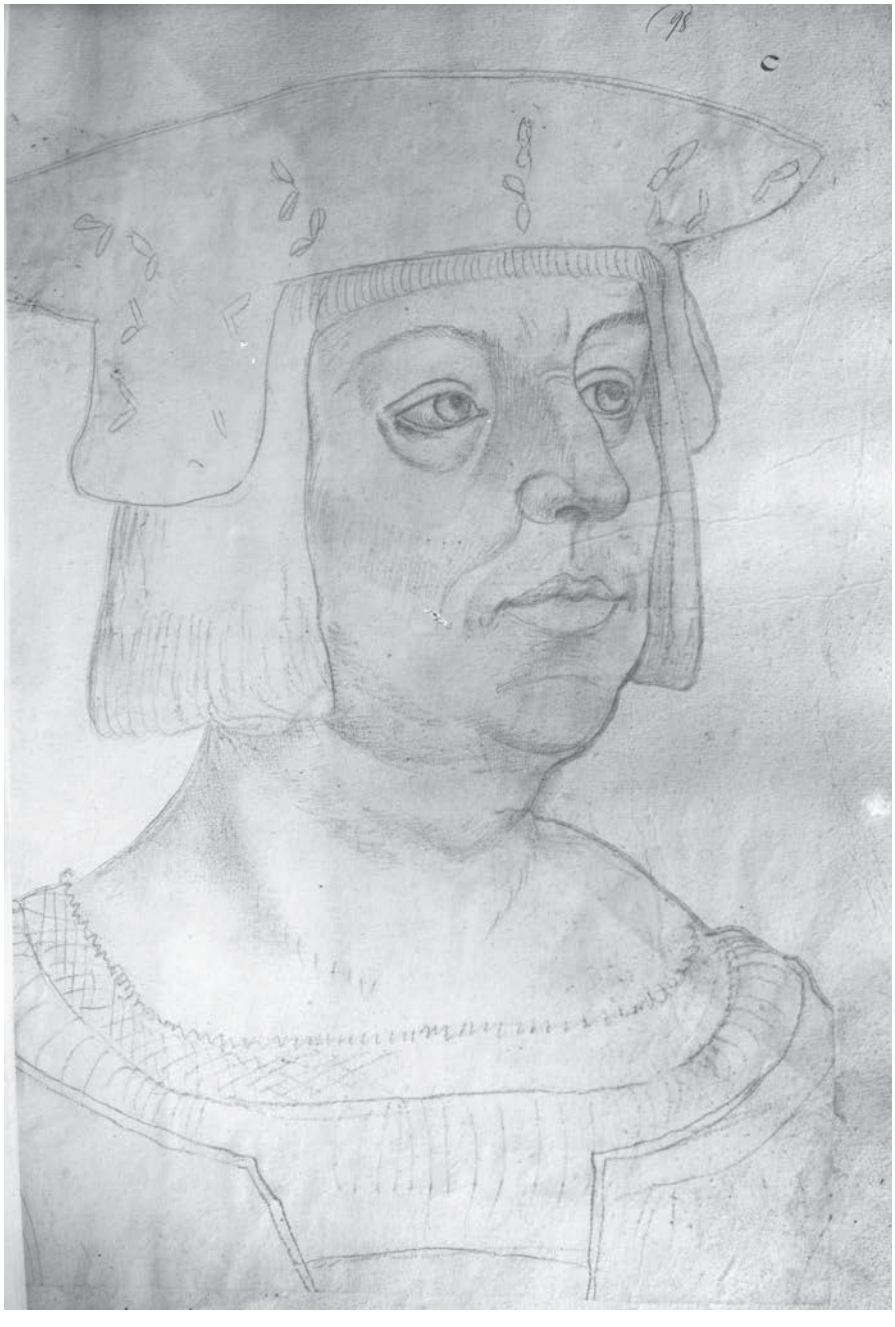
645 Cf Ep 916:407–56 (CWE 43 16–18).
646 The dedicatory letter is Ep 1043 (c November 1519).
647 Cf Ep 1043:42–67 (CWE 44 3).
648 Cf Ep 1065, and for the publication in May, n642 above. The dedicatory letter is Ep 956.

Portrait of Erard de la Marck, dedicatee of the *Paraphrase on the Two Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians*, by Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



Portrait of Philip of Burgundy, dedicatee of the *Paraphrases on the Pastoral Epistles*
Gemeente Bibliotheek, Rotterdam

writes, 'may seem somewhat remote from our own time.'[649] Implicitly, however, Erasmus appeals to the authority of history: the Epistle is a mirror imaging from the past the direction for the present. The dedication is particularly interesting for its attempt to portray the young Antoine, 'barely four and twenty,'[650] as the model of youth reflecting a humanistic education: a young man 'born for the study of that sublime philosophy which summons us to the contemplation of heavenly things,' who thought nothing more important than to devote his time to 'liberal studies and honourable accomplishments.'[651] Obsequious words, designed to please but tragically ironic in the sequel! In fact, Antoine did not receive Erasmus' *Paraphrase* with either grace or gratitude.[652] Moreover, in 1521 he conspired to unseat his uncle Erard from his bishopric. Understandably, the dedication did not appear with the *Paraphrase* after 1522.

After the three *Paraphrases* of 1519, Erasmus completed paraphrasing the apostolic Epistles in 1520 and early 1521. While the dedicatees of the former were prince-bishops (Antoine de la Marck excepted), the dedicatees of the latter *Paraphrases* were international diplomats. The *Paraphrases* on Ephesians to 2 Thessalonians, a single publication, were dedicated to Cardinal Campeggi, papal legate in England in 1518–19, who then returned to Rome (Ep 1062); those on the two Peters and Jude to Cardinal Wolsey, in some measure a rival of Campeggi, who had indeed received co-legatine powers as a condition of Campeggi's entrance into England (Ep 1112);[653] James and the three Johns to Cardinal Schiner, a diplomat serving the interests of the emperor since 1516 and joining the imperial court in 1520 (Epp 1171, 1179);[654] and Hebrews to Silvestro Gigli, bishop of Worcester, at one time papal nuncio in England and later English ambassador in Rome (Ep 1181).[655]

The most interesting of these later dedications is undoubtedly the first, dated 5 February 1520, to Cardinal Campeggi, the recipient of the *Paraphrases* on Ephesians to 2 Thessalonians. As before with Erard de la Marck, Erasmus had initiated the contact with this cardinal – in May 1519 while Campeggi was still legate in England. Erasmus apparently thought that Campeggi 'was

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649 Cf Ep 956:32–3 (CWE 42 92–3).
650 Ep 956:21–2 (CWE 42 92)
651 Ep 956:9–10, 23–4 (CWE 42 92)
652 Cf Ep 1065:5–6.
653 Cf CEBR I 253–4; Campeggi, 'always a loyal servant,' would later serve as papal legate on several important missions.
654 Cf CEBR III 222 and CWE 44 132 n1.
655 Cf CEBR II 98.

in a position to influence [Erasmus'] aspirations for preferment in England.'[656] But in February 1520 Campeggi was in Rome,[657] and Erasmus' position at Louvain, as we have seen, had become increasingly difficult: in the latter part of 1519 the situation of the Collegium Trilingue had become hazardous; the faculty of theology had condemned certain propositions from the writings of Luther, with whom Erasmus had now, in the minds of his opponents, become in some manner associated; and the 'peace' of 13 September between Erasmus and the theologians was broken. Now that Campeggi was in Rome, Erasmus took the opportunity offered by this dedicatory letter to canvass his support in asking the pope to force the partisans of the 'new education' based on the humanities and those of the 'old' based, Erasmus contended, on Aristotelian philosophy to replace their mutual hostility with good will and peaceful negotiations. If the letter was particularly appropriate to the immediate situation in Louvain in late December 1519 and early January 1520, the request for papal silencing was not new. In the previous August, before the peace of September, Erasmus had appealed directly to Pope Leo to silence his enemies.[658] Remarkably, the dedication says virtually nothing about the Epistles paraphrased!

The dedication to Campeggi is unique in the extent to which it was revised for publication in the first collected edition of the *Paraphrases* in March 1521.[659] By late 1520 the papal bull (15 June 1520) giving Luther sixty days to recant had been published in the Netherlands, and Erasmus was securely tied to Luther in the minds of influential theologians. The Collegium Trilingue

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656 Ep 961 introduction

657 Erasmus cemented his relationship with Campeggi in a meeting with the cardinal in Brussels in the summer of 1519, when the Cardinal was returning to Rome; cf Ep 1062:200–4 with n18.

658 Cf Ep 1007:118–23 and 'New Testament Scholarship' nn608, 609 above. Although hostility towards the theologians was manifested on the side of the humanists, as the events surrounding the activities of Wilhelm Nesen both in the summer and in December of 1519 show, Erasmus was undoubtedly interested primarily in silencing the theologians. Nevertheless, in August 1519 Erasmus acknowledged in the letter to the pope (Ep 1007) the mutual responsibility of both humanists and theologians to establish a peaceful coexistence. This acknowledgment in August may have been diplomacy, but in the dedicatory letter to Campeggi the following February Erasmus accepts mutual responsibility as a foundation for negotiating peace.

659 Cf Ep 1167 introduction, where it is said that Erasmus revised the letter in late 1520.

had, it is true, been officially accepted by the university in the preceding March, but the hostility towards it remained on the part of some theologians; Erasmus continued to believe that those who brought charges against Luther had as their goal the destruction of the humanities, pointing, as they might, to Erasmus' supposed connection with Luther. The central theme of the letter as it had been written in early 1520 was still therefore very relevant in 1521, and Erasmus revised the letter to strengthen, through rhetorical enhancement, his argument for mutual respect. But at this time there was much talk about conciliation between Luther and his followers and the Catholic church, and after the coronation of Charles, when the court was in Cologne, Erasmus and Johannes Faber had produced a 'plan' for reconciliation.[660] Accordingly, the letter as revised in 1521 included at the end a proposal for restoring concord not only in the universities but in the church as well, a proposal that echoed the *Consilium* drawn up the previous November.[661]

As Wolsey had been appointed co-legate with Campeggi at the time of the latter's embassy to England, the dedicatee of the next set of *Paraphrases* (the two Peters and Jude), published in June 1520, was perhaps a foregone conclusion. In any case, Erasmus continued to look to Wolsey for reward in England. While the situation therefore invited flattery, Erasmus in this dedication seems to go so far as to encourage Wolsey's papal ambitions. He speaks of the 'aptness' of offering the writings of Peter, 'the incomparable head of the Christian religion' to Wolsey, 'such an outstanding religious leader, so that the … philosophy of the gospel, which was born and first promoted under [Peter's] leadership, should under [Wolsey's] pious care … be restored after its partial collapse.'[662]

That the dedication of the *Paraphrases* on James and 1–3 John should go to Cardinal Schiner Erasmus explains fully: Schiner was the man who, as Erasmus was completing the *Paraphrases* on the Pauline and Petrine Epistles, urged him to 'leave no portion of this task to others';[663] thus these *Paraphrases*

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660 Ie *Consilium*; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' n622 above.

661 Cf Ep 1062:166–80 (CWE 43 294–5). The original and revised versions of this letter are distinguished in CWE 43 284–97, as the 1521 revised version is identified in italics within the original 1520 version; the original is also printed separately in an appendix (476–8).

662 Ep 1112:25–30 (CWE 44 76)

663 Ep 1171:52. For this meeting between Erasmus and Schiner, and for other meetings in which Schiner encouraged Erasmus in his New Testament work, see 'New Testament Scholarship' 222–3 with n889.

Medallion with figure of Lorenzo Campeggi,
dedicatee of the *Paraphrases* on the Epistles of Paul to the Ephesians … 2 Thessalonians
British Museum, London: Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

Portrait of Thomas Wolsey, dedicatee of the *Paraphrases* on the Epistles of Peter and Jude
National Portrait Gallery, London

composed last but one were in some measure 'owed' to the cardinal. The Argument for the *Paraphrase on James* is brief; perhaps for that reason Erasmus includes in the dedicatory letter a characterization of the Epistle – an Epistle striking in its 'commonplaces.' The letter is, however, most remarkable for its vitriolic attack on Erasmus' opponents: 'What spirit hounds them on? ... Was there ever a generation that gave more scope to ignorance, effrontery, shamelessness, stupidity, and abusive language? ... What heroes!'[664] These words, dated 16 December 1520, sound Erasmus' desperation at the incurable malice evident in late 1520 in men like the suffragan bishop of Tournai, the Dominican gang, and the university professor Nicolaas Baechem.[665]

The dedication of the *Paraphrase on Hebrews* to Silvestro Gigli fulfilled a promise made in March of the previous year to repay Gigli for his efforts in helping Erasmus secure a diploma, 'probably a document issued in the name of Leo X permitting Erasmus to eat meat in Lent.'[666] 'If I live one more year,' wrote Erasmus in March 1520, 'I shall bear witness that I know how much I am beholden to you.'[667] In the dedicatory letter Erasmus addressed Gigli as a 'distinguished supporter of liberal studies,'[668] noting that Gigli served as a model to encourage the pursuit of higher studies. As he approached the end of his letter, Erasmus struck a note of qualified confidence on the theme of the liberal arts: 'The classical languages and liberal studies have almost reached a stage at which we may hope that their future is secure, though even now there is active opposition from the champions of ancient ignorance.'[669] A short paragraph returns to the theme of the obscurity of Paul, only to accent Erasmus' own work in illuminating the writings of the Apostle: 'For this [Erasmus' illumination of Scripture] no credit may be due to my brains, and none to my scholarship, but I do claim something for my industry!'[670]

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664 Ep 1171:63–89
665 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 158 with nn623–5 above.
666 Cf Ep 1079:6–7 with nn1 and 3, but cf also 159.
667 Ep 1079:14–15
668 Ep 1181:5 (CWE 44 212)
669 Ep 1181:36–8 (CWE 44 213; cf 213 n4). Erasmus' confidence may reflect the success of the Collegium Trilingue, which had begun to move into its own purchased quarters on 18 October 1520; Henry de Vocht *History of the Foundation and the Rise of the Collegium Trilingue Lovaniense 1517–1530* Humanistica Lovaniensia 10–13, 4 vols (Louvain 1951) II 62. But for continuing opposition see 'New Testament Scholarship' 157 with nn617, 618.
670 Ep 1181:31–2 (CWE 44 212)

## The Paraphrases on the Apostolic Epistles: A Selective Reading

I indicated above that when Erasmus undertook to compose a *Paraphrase* on a book of the New Testament he worked intensively from the words, clauses, and individual sentences of the Latin and Greek texts; at the same time, however, while he was paraphrasing the minute portions of the biblical text, he kept firmly in mind the broader context of 'paragraph,' chapter, and indeed the entire book.[671] Characteristically, he brought to the paraphrase of the sentence his view of the book as a whole, its literary character, and its leading themes, a view that was overarching and affected his paraphrase on the sentence, sometimes decisively so. Moreover, Erasmus wrote his *Paraphrases* with a keen sense of time – a sense of time that was theological in its projection of images of saving-history, pastoral in its interpretation of the past in terms of the present, and historical in its portrait of the primitive Christian setting of the Epistles. These are features we may observe in a review of the *Paraphrases* on several of the Epistles. I choose one from each of the separate publications of the *Paraphrases* on the Pauline Epistles and one from the Catholic Epistles. I follow the order of publication.

### *Paraphrase on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*

In the *Paraphrase on Romans* Erasmus had recognized that the thought of Paul in the Epistle ultimately resolved itself into a theology of history, a vision elaborated particularly in the paraphrases on the climactic chapters 10 and 11. The First Epistle to the Corinthians, on the other hand, was not, as Erasmus well understood, generated from a grand vision of history but from a series of very practical problems in the newly established church at Corinth. As the Argument to the *Paraphrase* indicates, Erasmus saw in the letter a portrait of a community of converts in a morally depraved city who failed both as individuals and as a community to conform satisfactorily to the pattern of life implied by their conversion. The problem invited the question, 'What does it mean to be Christian?' In the Argument Erasmus observed that no one suddenly becomes a 'perfect Christian.' On the contrary, 'it is … an arduous task to be transformed into another person – from those conditions in which you were born and to which you have long been habituated.' The full realization

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671 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 90 with n368. For a conjectural reconstruction of Erasmus' procedure in paraphrasing see John Bateman's Translator's Note, CWE 44 xiv–xvi.

of the meaning of the name 'Christian' comes through growth and by stages. Growth is prevented by the 'diseases of the soul' – avarice, pride, indulgence, and trust in worldly philosophy; it is facilitated by charity.[672] Thus a central endeavour in the *Paraphrase* is the attempt to illustrate the meaning of the term 'Christian.'

This endeavour comes into particularly sharp focus in the paraphrases on chapters 5–10, where the use of the term is both abundant and ubiquitous. Although on occasion the term 'Christian' may seem to designate someone who, simply through baptism, may lay claim to the title, for example, Christian man, Christian woman, Christian master,[673] it pervasively suggests the standards assumed in the concept of that Christian perfection towards which the reader is implicitly invited to grow. Repeatedly the *Paraphrase* notes what is becoming to, permissible, unseemly or shameful for a Christian or for the name of Christian.[674] There are those whose lives deny the name, who, though called 'Christian,' betray the name by their vices; there are 'falsely called Christians,' 'scandalous Christians.'[675] For the various nouns to which the adjective 'Christian' is applied, the range of reference is broadly extended: Christian gentleness, Christian innocence, Christian practice, Christian wedlock, Christian strength, Christian piety, Christian purity, Christian unanimity, Christian faith, Christian charity,[676] all pointing to the notion of becoming 'fully Christian.'[677] The term may, with qualification, be applied even to pagans; the qualification is noteworthy: a man not initiated into Christ who lives 'tranquilly' with his wife and who 'tranquilly sees the symbol of the cross fastened over their common bed is not wholly a pagan but in some part a Christian.'[678] The idea of the 'Christian philosophy' receives extensive elaboration in the paraphrase on chapters 1–3. The Christian philosophy is the philosophy of Christ that adapts itself to the stages of Christian growth, a philosophy marked not by dissension and debate but by unanimity of mind,

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672 Cf the Argument to 1 Corinthians, CWE 43 19–21. The contrast between the 'diseases of the soul' and 'faith and charity' is sharply etched in *Ratio*; cf 579–94 (diseases) and 596–614 (faith and charity).
673 Cf eg CWE 43 94, 101.
674 Cf CWE 43 69, 75, 101, 109.
675 Cf eg CWE 43 21, 23, 74.
676 Cf eg CWE 43 71, 72, 74, 109, 113, 115, 133, 146, 168 respectively; and for Christian charity see 110, 115, 118, 136.
677 Cf CWE 43 113.
678 Cf CWE 43 95.

a philosophy whose teachings are centred in the facts of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, a spiritual philosophy not based on human syllogisms but imbibed in a spiritual manner by spiritual people.[679]

In so far as the *Paraphrase* is a representation of the Epistle, the term 'Christian' is anachronistic; it appears nowhere in the Epistles to the Corinthians or anywhere else in the Pauline Epistles.[680] The anachronism serves to orient the paraphrastic text to the sixteenth century and thus to draw the biblical text into the world of Erasmus' readers, granting immediacy to the biblical text and authority to the paraphrastic text. This is, in general, a well-known characteristic of Erasmus' *Paraphrases*, and the effect is sustained in this *Paraphrase*. There is an unmistakable innuendo in the allusions to philosophy: the mind turns at once to the familiar and always emphatic distinction Erasmus made between the 'philosophy of Christ' and the prevailing scholastic theology of the historic universities of sixteenth-century Europe. Perhaps nowhere in the entire text does the language compel more blatantly a reference to the world of the sixteenth century than in the paraphrase on 1 Corinthians 3:4, where the divisions of the Corinthians become manifestly the divisions among the monastic orders, whose fictitious names cannot conceal the intended reference: Frangilius, Benotius, Augelius, Carmilius.[681] The Christians who are to grow into Christian perfection are Erasmus' contemporaries.

There remains, however, a splendid ambiguity of time, for Erasmus does not allow the paraphrastic text to become entirely unmoored from the Epistle's first-century setting. In developing the definition of 'Christian,' there are signals, sometimes subtle, that point to the world of ancient Corinth. The philosophers whose teaching contrasts so sharply with Christian philosophy are, after all, the philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome. In the paraphrase on 12:2 the 'brothers' are reminded that they were once *pagani* 'pagans,' worshippers of idols. In the paraphrase on 9:21 the Apostle recounts events in his life to explain his practice of 'accommodation,' and in the next chapter the paraphrase carefully locates the historical time that is implied in the Pauline

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679 See CWE 43 51, 33, 48–50 respectively for these descriptors.

680 The term appears at only three points in the New Testament: Acts 11:26, 26:28, and 1 Pet 4:16.

681 Cf CWE 43 52 with n10.

reference to the Jewish temple sacrifices – Jews 'still' (*adhuc*) offer victims.[682] The call to be Christian is not abstracted from but rooted in the past, while the personae of the ancient world meet us in our present world in the pages of the biblical text paraphrased.

### *Paraphrase on the Epistle to the Galatians*

Paul's letter to the Galatians is remarkable both for its autobiographical account and for the intensity of feeling the Apostle displays in it. In paraphrase, the drama inherent in the letter itself was not missed by the author of the *Colloquies*. Erasmus enhances the dramatic qualities of the Epistle by a paraphrase that seems to increase the psychological force in the Apostle's self-awareness. The paraphrastic Paul recognizes that his devotion to the Law before his conversion was fostered by the pleasure he received from the commendation his fellow Jews lavished upon him. He speaks with a certain bravado of his call by the risen Lord, a call that makes him equal to, indeed by implication, superior to the other apostles. He accents his special position as the recipient of the 'mystery,' the mystery that the gentiles are invited to grace without the Law. Erasmus effectively magnifies the intensity with which the Apostle speaks in the Epistle. The rhetorical questions of the Epistle are multiplied in the *Paraphrase*, a single question is paraphrased into several, and new series of questions are added. In the paraphrase on Galatians 4:19–20 both sentiment and a prose flowing with vivid, rhythmic expression bring the emotion of the Apostle before the reader: 'Would that you might turn your eyes into my heart … A letter does not adequately express the feeling of my heart. Would that I might be among you … My face, my tears, the ardour of my voice itself would add something … I would change myself into everything, now coaxing, now entreating, now reprimanding.' In the *Paraphrase on Galatians* paraphrastic interpretation extends beyond the thought of the Apostle to the figure of Paul himself and thus stands as a significant artistic achievement.

The Epistle to the Galatians does not outline the grand vision of history found in Romans, but in its central contrast between Law and gospel its theology is securely tied to an understanding of progressive revelation in saving-history. In paraphrasing the Epistle Erasmus accentuates two aspects of this revelation: obedience and trust. Saving-history marks a progression

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682 Cf CWE 43 34 (philosophers), 149 (pagans), 125–6 (biographical details), 135 (sacrifices).

from obligatory obedience to the Law to freely given obedience to the demands of love, and a progression from trust in the legalities of the Old Covenant to trust simply in the grace and mercy of God. '… God restrained his own people by the severity of the Law when they were still young and uncultivated, until, by laying hold of evangelical faith, they should be restored to him and … live freely as free-born children under the mercy of a kind parent.'[683] In this architectonic way, with the sweep of history in view, the *Paraphrase* places faith at the centre of God's saving action and defines that faith as 'trust.' At the same time, the historical context of the Epistle offered Erasmus the opportunity to exemplify the concept of 'accommodation' imaged in the concentric circles of the *Ratio*. Progressive revelation implies continuous development but not necessarily instantaneous change; there is a place for the accommodation of human weakness, as in the case of the Jewish-Christians of Galatia who could not suddenly abandon their paternal customs.

### *Paraphrase on the First Epistle to Timothy*

In paraphrasing 1 Timothy Erasmus grasped the opportunity to explore the notions conveyed by the Latin word *pietas*, the word that both in the Vulgate and in Erasmus' translation consistently expressed the Greek word *εὐσέβεια* 'godliness.' Indeed, *pietas* is a word that lay close to the heart of Erasmus' conception of religion. The Greek word, repeated several times in the Epistle, lay in fact at its centre, where in chapter 3 the Apostle describes the 'mystery of godliness' (3:16 AV; 'the mystery of our religion' RSV) and in chapter 4 exhorts Timothy to exercise himself in godliness, which 'is of value in every way' (4:7 RSV). From the many associations attached to the word in the *Paraphrase* we may draw a generalizing definition, that true *pietas* 'godliness' is the full absorption into life of Christian faith and practice expressed in worship and charitable deeds. Certain emphases predominate. The labyrinthine questions of theological debate subvert the very essence of godliness; by contrast, the 'mystery of godliness' is the simple 'rule of faith,' in effect, the Apostles' Creed.[684] Closely linked to the insoluble problems of the theological schools are the petty human regulations – 'Judaic superstitions' – from which

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683 Paraphrase on Gal 3:24–5 CWE 42 114
684 Cf CWE 44 8 and 23.

godliness is free.[685] Godliness is the full range of Christian virtues realized in deed and thought and desire, for the practice of which peace is especially conducive.[686] It is the worship of Christ along with the prayers 'for the work of godliness.'[687] Godliness is to fulfill one's responsibility to family, strangers and relatives.[688] In the paraphrase on 1 Timothy 4:12 Paul challenges the young Timothy to practise the virtues that would make him a model of godliness: '… modesty and purity in the conduct of life … a love worthy of a bishop in the performance of duties … a heart trusting in God in its endurance of evils … [a man] untouched in any respect by human passions.'[689] The nature of godliness is illuminated by the frequent reference in the *Paraphrase* to ungodliness and the ungodly: pagans are ungodly in so far as they do not worship the true God, but so are those Christians who in preaching the gospel rave against the teachings of the gospel.[690] Soldiers given to the vices associated with war are ungodly, as are hypocritical Christians who promote practices that hinder godliness, wearing a mask of holiness although inwardly they are 'sodden' with all the vices that are 'diametrically opposed to genuine godliness.'[691] Thus true godliness is expressed by true faith in the true God and in true charity towards God and our fellow human beings.[692]

Ambiguity of time, characteristic in varying degrees in Erasmus' *Paraphrases,* is particularly noteworthy in the *Paraphrase* on 1 Timothy. On the one hand, Erasmus repeatedly identifies the primitive Christian setting of the Epistle. Timothy presides over a flock of Christians who live in a pagan world, where governors are pagan, the ancient Roman administrative system is assumed, the populace, in general pagan, offers sacrifices to demons,

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685 Cf CWE 44 23.
686 Cf CWE 44 14.
687 CWE 44 12–13
688 Cf CWE 44 28–31.
689 CWE 44 26
690 Cf CWE 44 13 and 12 respectively.
691 Cf CWE 44 14 and 24 respectively.
692 Cf the paraphrase on 1 Tim 4:8: ' … evangelical godliness [rests] on sincere faith and true love' CWE 44 25. Erasmus' exposition of 'godliness' in the *Paraphrase* on 1 Timothy reflects an interest in the theme that runs across many of his writings; cf eg *Enchiridion* CWE 66 65, *In psalmum 1* CWE 63 15–25, and the study of *pietas* by John W. O'Malley in the introduction to CWE 66 (xv–xxv). Cf also the affirmation in the *Ratio* that the chief duty of piety is to lead a sinner to repent, 629 with n726. In his Introductory Note to the *Ecclesiastes* James Butrica observes that in that late work (1535) the concept of 'godliness' reflects the classical definition as 'the virtue by which we assign to each what is owed,' CWE 67 159.

judges take their oath before false gods.[693] In a brief psychological sketch, the paraphrase on 1 Timothy 3:6–7 invites Timothy and the early Christian church to consider the reaction of pagans to a neophyte bishop: '"It is a good thing he has left us," they will say. "He has the reward for his change of religion. He preferred to be a Christian bishop than to live among us as a private person."'[694] On the other hand, the intertextuality of the Erasmian writings in general and his self-disclosure in them inevitably load certain expressions with a contemporary significance. Thus an allusion to Jewish legalism is likely to carry a contemporary reference, recognition of which becomes virtually inescapable when Erasmus introduces a passage with an expression like 'even today': 'Even today there is no shortage of persons who would deny any approach to the benefit of Christ except through the law of Moses.'[695] The law of Moses is an obvious metaphor for the 'human regulations,' the 'Judaism' of Erasmus' 'today.' Similarly, Erasmus' frequently spoken and well-known criticism of the faculties of theology in contemporary universities immediately appears in images such as 'verbal labyrinths' and 'clouds of empty questions.' In the *Paraphrase* Paul's rejection of *magnifici tituli* 'imposing titles,' of which the false apostles of the first century are so fond, forces an allusion not only to the 'false teachers' of the primitive church but also to the theology professors of sixteenth-century Europe, to whom the proud title of *magister noster* was given.[696] And just as an expression like 'today' fosters ambiguity, so likewise does the persistent generalization of reference especially evident in the paraphrase on 1 Timothy 1. The paraphrase explicitly refuses to name the 'false apostles' ('"certain ones" who teach a strange doctrine'), and the references thereafter to indefinite 'people,' to 'anyone,' to 'the person who' easily and inevitably turn the mind of the reader to the sixteenth century.[697]

### *Paraphrase on the Epistle to the Colossians*

Somewhat in contrast to the pervasive sense of 'double time' in the *Paraphrase* on 1 Timothy – and certainly in that on 1 Corinthians – in the *Paraphrase* on

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693 For the allusions see respectively CWE 44 13, 22, 13, 32.
694 CWE 44 20–1
695 Cf CWE 44 15.
696 For the satirical use of the term *magister noster* see the paraphrase on Matt 3:17 CWE 45 71 with n65; cf also the paraphrase on Matt 23:7–10 CWE 45 315 with n14.
697 Cf CWE 44 7–9.

Colossians the historical setting provides for the reader a dominating perspective from which to view the Epistle. The reader will indeed recognize in the *Paraphrase* a theology and an ethic perennially applicable, but Erasmus develops the *Paraphrase* with continued and decisive reference to its primitive Christian setting.

The *Paraphrase* emphasizes the physical separation of the writer from his addressees. The paraphrastic Paul has a special relation to the Colossian Christians: he has never seen them and so has never instructed them – or rather he has instructed them but indirectly through Epaphras. It is precisely this situation that invites him to instruct them further, particularly because they are now being challenged to grant an unwarranted eminence to angels.[698] This particular historical situation provides the rationale for the richly theological passages for which the Epistle is justly famous: 1:15–20 (Christology) and 2:13–15 (soteriology).

The *Paraphrase* also sets in creative tension the 'biographies' of writer and addressee. The Colossians are converts with a dark record of paganism in their past: You are people, says the Apostle, who 'were once so estranged from God that you worshipped likenesses of demons instead of him … by impious works you played the part of foes.'[699] The Colossians live in a world of pagans whose association they cannot escape.[700] They live in a period of history when the distinction beween Jew and gentile, while marked and relevant, has been decisively eliminated in Christ.[701] In the paraphrastic elaboration of the Apostle's response to this particular people it is the historical Paul that emerges more than the timeless theologian. As in the *Paraphrase on Galatians*, the text reveals the anxiety of the Apostle. He addresses the Colossians personally and by name, 'people of Colossae,' and expresses frustration at his present situation: he cannot see them physically but gazes upon them constantly 'with the eyes of the mind' in alarm at the danger that lurks around them. It is in this context that he describes his own sufferings as a 'goad' for those who have not seen him, a goad to encourage them to 'be united in evangelical charity.'[702] It is also in this context that he directs especially to them that problematic passage in 1:24 ('I fill up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ'): 'The fetters I endure for your salvation … I am

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698 Cf the paraphrase on Col 1:1–8 CWE 43 397–9.
699 CWE 43 403
700 Cf CWE 43 426–7.
701 Cf CWE 43 406–7 and 412–13.
702 Cf CWE 43 408.

suffering for your salvation … the full measure of your salvation and, indeed, not only of yours but of Christ's whole body.'[703]

We should now return to the two classic theological passages mentioned above. Erasmus introduces his paraphrase on the Christological passage (1:15–20) with a remarkable change in the personal pronouns in the immediately preceding verses: in spite of the use of the first person in his Greek text, his own translation, and the Vulgate ('he has delivered *us* … in whom *we* have redemption'), Erasmus makes Paul speak directly to the Colossians in the second person: '… although previously you had been worshippers of images and demons, he saw fit to enrol you in the company of Jews … to impart the light of evangelical truth to you who were previously enveloped in the thickest darkness of ignorance.'[704] In the soteriological passage (2:13–15) the paraphrase accentuates the immediate Jewish background. The 'binding contract' nailed to the cross is the Mosaic law of which 'Jewish circumcision' is the decisive sign.[705] The stage is set for the Jews who live among the Colossians to make an appearance in the narrative: one persuades the Colossians to follow his example and be circumcised, another issues precepts 'according to the carnal sense of the Mosaic law.'[706]

The dominant historical orientation of the *Paraphrase* does not, to be sure, eliminate the potential for universal applicability. The intertextuality of Erasmus' writings invites the reader inevitably to imagine the contemporary significance of the historical situation portrayed. When in the *Paraphrases* we hear the word 'Jew,' we cannot escape the force of the typical Erasmian equation of the historical Jew with the legalist of any age. But this *Paraphrase* is marked by its relative lack of those characteristic signposts that draw the reader irresistibly from the past to the present. Here Erasmus seems to have delighted in the unusual historical setting of the ubiquitous Paul admonishing a group of people whom he had never met.

### *Paraphrase on the Epistle of James*

Erasmus concluded his annotations on the Epistle of James by questioning its apostolic authorship, but noted that the Epistle was in any case filled with salubrious precepts; accordingly, he 'esteemed and embraced' it. Certainly

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703 CWE 43 405
704 CWE 43 400
705 Cf CWE 43 414–15.
706 Cf the paraphrases on Col 2:11 and 21 CWE 43 412 and 417.

Medallion with figure of Matthäus Schiner, dedicatee of the *Paraphrases* on the Epistles of James and 1–3 John
Münzsammlung des Kantonarchives, Sitten

the *Paraphrase* suggests that for him it was no 'Epistle of straw.' In fact, in proportion to the biblical text it is, with Luke, the most expansive of all Erasmus' *Paraphrases*.[707]

In the *Paraphrase* on James Erasmus exploited the literary character of the Epistle, which offers a lively narrative, marked by sharp contrasts, vivid images, brief dramatic scenes, and a sense of close encounter between the author and his readers. The image in James 1:10 of the swift decay of the 'flower of the grass' becomes in paraphrase an extended, emotionally charged picture: 'You see the newly born flower? What beauty, what splendour, what charm … what youthful freshness … But presently at the blast of the south wind … what drooping, what decay, what death!'[708] In James 3:1–11 the vivid, forceful images describing the tongue acquire a certain ferocity in paraphrase and become the occasion for a vicious excursus on the evil of slander. The paraphrase turns the condemnation of the rich in James 5:1–6 into an extended picture of the folly and cruelty of the rich and the misery of the poor. The force of the direct address sustained throughout the Epistle is enhanced in the paraphrase by the pressing rhetorical questions – 'Do you want to hear? ... Does not your heart protest?' The drama of 2:1–4 is effectively recalled in the paraphrase on verses 5–8, and its moral lesson driven home with the finger-pointing of prophetic judgment, giving the imaginary scene dramatic immediacy: This is just what you have done: 'you gave preference … you held in contempt.' Indeed, throughout the *Paraphrase* Erasmus takes advantage of the immediacy of the speaker-listener relation to draw out the interior responses of the listeners as they might be imagined.

The *Paraphrase* appears to interpret the Epistle as a repository of evangelical wisdom, thus placing it within the genre of wisdom literature broadly defined, a point perhaps suggested by Erasmus' description of the Epistle as a work crowded with commonplaces.[709] Hence the frequent, sometimes extended allusions in the *Paraphrase* to New Testament literature, often echoes from the Sermon on the Mount – 'blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake'; 'the poor are promised the kingdom of heaven'; 'whoever

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707 Seven columns of Latin biblical text (*1522*) are represented in paraphrase by twenty-four pages in the 1523 *Tomus secundus*, thus beween three and four pages of paraphrase to one column of biblical text. For Luke see 'New Testamant Scholarship' nn913 and 1035.

708 CWE 44 139–40

709 In the dedicatory letter Ep 1171:14–39 CWE 44 132–3

calls his brother a fool is in danger of hellfire'; 'the speck in a brother's eye.'[710] The ultimate wisdom is found in the philosophy of Christ, and the *Paraphrase* becomes almost a compendium of this philosophy. Thus the *Paraphrase* in the first chapter places the Christian life within the framework of the 'new philosophy that Christ, the heavenly teacher, brought into the world [and that] has taught us this new wisdom.'[711] It is a philosophy whose evangelical teaching 'has transformed us into completely different persons'[712] in accordance with which Christ becomes the *scopus* 'the target point' from which the Christian never takes away his eyes.[713] This is the life that begins with our 'new and happier birth.'[714]

This wisdom inherent in the philosophy of Christ accounts also for the fallen human condition and its restoration. Before our new birth, 'we have, to our despite, imitated Adam,' who 'has begotten us subject to darkness.' But we are also born with a 'certain propensity to vicious behaviour implanted in our souls from the vice of our first parents.' This propensity is a seed that, if not weeded out, grows like a fetus in the soul and gives birth to mortal sin, and mortal sin in turn gives birth to death.[715] These assertions on the problem of sin reflect an ambiguity similar to that in the annotations on Romans 5:12.

However, through the faith that places all our trust in God alone we can win the eternal life promised.[716] This faith must be an active faith. It is strikingly noticeable that in paraphrasing chapter 2 Erasmus generally replaces the faith-works dichotomy found in the Epistle with the theological virtues of faith and charity, and undertakes to articulate the relation between the two: 'What is faith without love? … Faith which does not work through love is unproductive … Love is to faith what the soul is to the body … Love is the inseparable companion of saving faith.'[717] Thus at the heart of the Epistle of James is the wisdom of the evangelical philosophy.

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710 Cf respectively CWE 44 140, 147, 145, 164.
711 CWE 44 137–8
712 CWE 44 143
713 CWE 44 145
714 CWE 44 142
715 CWE 44 142 and 141
716 Cf CWE 44 152.
717 CWE 44 150–1

## VI THE SEPARATE LATIN EDITIONS AND THE *RATIO* (1519–23)

Although Erasmus often insisted that he never intended his Latin version of the New Testament to replace the Vulgate in public use, he also frequently expressed his view that many educated people would prefer to read the Scriptures in a version pleasing to those accustomed to the more elegant idiom of standard classical Latin. Publishers concurred with Erasmus' conviction and soon saw a profitable market in a book that was smaller than the large complex New Testaments Froben had produced, a book without either the Greek or the annotations, containing Erasmus' Latin version only, thus designed to reach a wider audience.[718] Three such editions published, one in 1519, one in 1520, and one in 1522/1523, are of particular interest because of their obvious authorization by Erasmus with prefaces that became increasingly enriched in each successive edition.[719] Dirk Martens in Louvain was the first to publish, in 1519, an edition of this kind, adopting Erasmus' translation of the 1519 New Testament. The edition is remarkable for its brief but distinctly crabby preface in which Erasmus indicates his objection to the endeavour.[720] In 1520 Andreas Cratander, a Basel printer, published another edition, based on the translation in the 1519 New Testament. It included the Arguments Erasmus had composed in late 1518 for the apostolic Epistles, the dedicatory letter to Pope Leo that prefaced the 1516 New Testament, and Leo's letter to Erasmus prefacing the 1519 New Testament.[721] It also offered a preface of some significance, exhorting the 'pious reader' to discover and realize in life the 'philosophy of Christ.' Finally, Froben published an edition

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718 The separate Latin versions undoubtedly bolstered the aggregate number of sales of the New Testament – in 1526 Erasmus claimed that his translation of the New Testament had been 'disseminated by the printers in more than 100,000 copies'; cf Ep 1723:36–8 with n5.

719 The prefaces to the separate Latin editions have been introduced in this volume by Alexander Dalzell; see 'Separate Latin Editions' 714–16.

720 Cf the first lines of the preface to the Martens edition, where Erasmus notes that in spite of his protests 'other men's wisdom, or their love of money' won the day, Ep 1010:5–6 ('Separate Latin Editions' 718). Erasmus protested again in his response to Lee (1520); cf *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 35, 40. For Martens' use of the translation published in the Froben 1519 edition of the *Novum Testamentum* see 'Separate Latin Editions' 714.

721 Epp 384 and 864 respectively

with a new preface in July 1522,[722] adopting the translation of the 1522 edition of the New Testament published the previous February. This volume began, after the title page, with a brief table of contents, followed on the same page by a short letter 'To the Pious Reader,' the first lines of which abbreviated the prefatory 'Apology' of the Martens' edition, while the last lines called for concord in the church – a message, however brief, appropriate to the times. Erasmus added a fragment of 'Athanasius' on the canon of the New Testament, listing books whose authority as Scripture was disputed. In some copies the essay *De philosophia evangelica* was placed as a preface, following the fragment of 'Athanasius'; in others the essay followed the Latin text as an 'afterword,' as it did when the edition was published again in January 1523.[723] Finally, the Froben edition printed among the prefaces the canon of Eusebius (translated into Latin) for the harmonization of the Gospels. It was a small volume but clearly intended to have weight.

The prefatory essays in these three editions offer a progressive enhancement of thought. The 'Letter to the Reader' in the Martens' edition of 1519 is, apart from its disgruntled tone, simply a radical abbreviation of the chief points made in the *Apologia* of the 1516 edition of the New Testament. In the 'Preface to the Pious Reader' of the 1520 Cratander edition, Erasmus' mood is more positive. Although the message is reminiscent of the *Paraclesis*, the tone is quite different. The rhetoric in this preface is that of the homilist, who begins his sermon with a verse of Scripture, in this case Matthew 11:28, 'Come unto me all you who labour and are heavily laden, and I will refresh you.' The personal address appropriate to a homily begins immediately and is sustained throughout: 'Whoever you are, come to me,' and is combined with the homilist's 'we' of sympathetic identification: 'Why, then, do we neglect …' The rhetoric here of deliberative speech conveys a message that is at its core notably Erasmian: Go to Christ, find Christ, identify with Christ. But how do we find Christ? By forsaking the world of corporeal things, by hungering deep within the soul for righteousness, by approaching Christ with faith. And where do we find Christ? Of course, in the Scriptures. 'He is present to his own … in the Gospels and apostolic Epistles … You can go to

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722 Froben had already published in 1521 what was virtually a copy of Cratander's publication; cf Allen Ep 1010 introduction. The popularity of Erasmus' Latin version is attested elsewhere as well: in 1520, for example, in Cologne there appeared, apparently without Erasmus' authorization, his translation of Romans along with the Argument he had composed for the Epistle but with no other prefatory material except the title page, and without the annotations.

723 Cf the Introductory Note to 'Separate Latin Editions' 715.

these as often as you please.' Erasmus adds, no doubt pointing to the present publication, 'You can even carry them about with you!' This 'homily' on the famous words of Matthew ends appropriately in discovery: 'Once we have tasted the water of this stream … [we] shall say … "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of life"' (John 6:68).

The *De philosophia evangelica* of 1522 not only recalls the *Paraclesis* but reflects some of the central themes of the *Ratio*. Like the 1520 preface in Cratander's edition, the *De philosophia evangelica* begins with the citation of Scripture, but there is nothing of the homilist in the tone or execution of this piece. The text of Romans 11:33–6 invites a profoundly theological question: to what extent can we approach or arrive at any understanding of God's great design in salvation-history? In particular, how does the Incarnation of Christ fit into the design? To these questions, which do indeed lie at the centre of Christian theology, Erasmus responds with a restatement of themes that lie at the heart of his Christian humanism. Because, in Erasmus' view, God's design in saving-history is the 'restoration and at the same time the perfection of nature as it was first fashioned in its uncorrupted state,' Erasmus is able to show how the great pagans inferring truth from the evidences of nature – that is, through general revelation – and the Hebrews receiving truth from special revelation prepared the way for Christ, who in his perfect life fulfilled both the anticipations of the pagans and the types and promises of the Old Testament. In the fullness of time, Christ summed up everything in heaven and on earth – in a compendium. It is from him that 'we progress and increase … [and] attain to perfection.' In concluding, Erasmus brings from this vision a message for the Europe of 1522 and 1523; that Christ can still live in us is a message for the times. 'For a long time now the world has been at war with Christ.' We, with his goodness, can vanquish the 'assaults of the wicked.' In this way the *De philosophia evangelica* calls the reader back to the brief letter 'To the Pious Reader' that prefaced this edition, reiterating and emphasizing its last lines that called for concord in a warring world.

### The *Ratio* of 1520

Froben published a new edition of the *Ratio verae theologiae* in February 1520.[724] The new edition enlarged the edition of 1518/1519 by almost one-third – no light revision therefore. It did indeed include minor revisions:

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724 This was followed by an edition in March with only minor variations from the February edition. I speak of both without distinction as the *Ratio* of 1520.

a phrase or line added for clarification or enhancement; some updating – Etienne Poncher, for example was no longer bishop of Paris but archbishop of Sens;[725] some fresh personal anecdotes. One notes also a somewhat greater engagement with patristic authors, though few new faces appear among these. In fact, the chief foci of the revisions lay elsewhere, finding their centre in three areas: in the latter part of the revised *Ratio* significant additions to the discussion on biblical hermeneutics; closer yet to the end of the work a more far-reaching and incisive critique of contemporary theological education in the universities; and, more or less in the centre, long additions given to an extensive review of the literature of the apostolic Epistles in order to complete a range of images confined in 1518/1519 almost entirely to the Gospels. The review of apostolic literature offered the occasion to expose afresh some of the themes central in the moral theology implicit in Erasmus' vision of ecclesiastical reform: themes of faith and charity; criticism of the authoritative status given to doctrinal formulations by the now sacrosanct theologians of the medieval world; criticism of indulgences, of papal power, of the practice of confession, of ceremonies. The revisions were timely. In a letter to Albert of Brandenburg dated 19 October 1519 Erasmus claims to have completed the revision.[726] The year 1519 was, as we have seen, a tumultuous one for Erasmus: relations with the faculty of theology were strained except for a brief time in September; the Collegium Trilingue had met with serious opposition; Luther had become a troubling focus of concern, and some theologians suspected Erasmus of collusion with Luther. Indeed, the letter to Albert cites sympathetically some of Luther's criticisms of ecclesiastical practices, criticisms that have an analogy in the revised *Ratio*.[727] That the apostolic Epistles should be featured so largely in the *Ratio* of *1520* may be attributed in part at least to Erasmus' endeavours in 1519 towards the completion of the *Paraphrases* on them. The extent and character of the major additions can be set out briefly in numbered paragraphs cued to the text of Holborn.

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725 Cf *Ratio* 497 with n43.

726 Cf Ep 1033:289–90. Although the dedicatory letter to Albert (17 December 1517), Ep 745 (but cf 102 n423 above), had appeared in the Martens edition of 1518, the revised edition of 1520 was the first edition published by Froben to include it; cf Ep 1033 n39. The dedication (to Johannes Fabri) for Froben's first edition of the separate *Ratio* (January 1519) was composed by Beatus Rhenanus; for the circumstances see Epp 953 and 976, and the Translator's Note to the *Ratio*, 481–2.

727 Cf Ep 1033:131–75.

**1/** Holborn 204:14–211:26 (cf 537–52 with nn244 and 311 below). Following the exposition of the concentric circles (*1519*), Erasmus points to Christ as the cynosure to which all must look who attempt to guide safely the ship of the church in prescribing regulations and laws, or in adopting authorities and creeds. Hence a discussion on the authority of the sacred Doctors of the past, a warning that their teachings were not inviolate, and a bold critique of those tenets, beliefs, and practices formulated by them and adopted by the church – some of which were unnecessary, some actually destructive. To follow them is to miss the *scopus* 'the target' at which all must aim. Erasmus recognized the audacity of his critique and qualified: 'It is not for me to tear down what has been accepted through common use … my intent at present is to teach, not to provoke' (546). The insertion of 1520 was broken by significant additions in *1522* and *1523*.

**2/** Holborn 223:32–227:25 (cf 573–9 below). A major survey of apostolic literature, ostensibly to show how the life and teachings of the apostles correspond to the pattern of their teacher, a pattern that had been described in *1519*, where the gentleness of the Christ found its place at the centre of the portrait. Consequently, Erasmus now draws a portrait of the apostles everywhere luminous with the bright colours of affability and civility, men gentle even in their severity! Once again as elsewhere in the *1520* additions, the point was made with the contemporary church in view, and Erasmus draws the comparison in the unmitigated language so characteristic of the criticisms in these additions. In contrast to the apostolic exemplars, 'in our day, certain bishops regard their people as purchased slaves, or, rather, as cattle'; 'we … do nothing else than threaten and terrify; we do not teach, we compel, we do not lead, we drag …' (574 and 579).

**3/** Holborn 232:28–235:7 (cf 588–92 below). Following the *1519* discussion of vices and virtues, a 1520 insertion summons the witness of Paul to expose the vice of 'self-confidence.' Erasmus gives the term here a rather broad sweep: it includes the arrogance of the scholar, the boastfulness of the administrator, and the reliance upon works rather than grace, a reliance that tempts every Christian. 'Self-trust' is 'a disease that makes us not only untaught but unteachable' (589). Erasmus reminds administrators that 'trustworthy though your adminstration may be, still, what you manage belongs to another' (591). And he defines 'righteousness from faith': 'when we attribute absolutely nothing to our own deeds, but acknowledge that whatever success we may have as we try for the best with all our might is the result of his [that is, Christ's] gift freely given' (589). Self-confidence is 'a disposition particularly harmful and destructive' (591).

**4/** Holborn 241:12–252:13 (cf 602–18 below). Another lengthy survey of apostolic literature shows how, with respect to faith, 'the teaching and character of the apostles conform to this pattern [of Christ].' Paul everywhere 'brings together' faith and charity (602). There is 'nothing in Romans he praises sooner than [the Romans'] faith' (603). He wants 'salvation to be credited to faith alone' (604–5). And on love, Erasmus writes, 'All of Paul everywhere breathes, resounds, thunders with nothing but the most ardent love' (605). Erasmus finds in the review of the 'love passages' an opportunity to raise an issue especially relevant in 1520: the evil of discord. Where there is love, there will not be discord, and 'where you see discord ruling, understand that religion is either absent or at least in trouble' (609). He may point to the monastic orders when he speaks of 'the differences among those who profess religion,' and to the university professors when he condemns 'contention in sacred studies' (609). He may have the challenge of Luther in mind when he refers to the 'extraordinary turmoil among Christians in our day' (611 with n637). Since 'where [faith and love] languish or are absent, superstition thrives' (614), he is able to find a correlation between discord and ceremonies. 'Because of these [ceremonies] the tranquillity of the Christian body is torn in pieces with great disturbances' (618).

**5/** While additions both small and large are made in *1520* at many points throughout the latter part of the *Ratio*, a bird's-eye view of the topography of the text enables us to map three major areas where Erasmus inserted a sequence of additions to enhance important themes established in *1518/1519*. Two of these sequences amplify the discussion of hermeneutics and are directed towards the biblical manner of speech. (i) In the first – Holborn 261:9–265:35 (cf 635 with nn758, 809 below) – Erasmus demonstrates further the power of imagery to stir the emotions. To the illustrations from the Gospels already given in *1518/1519* Erasmus now adds a few examples from the Old Testament but many from Paul, pointing to allegory and tropes, and to the distinction between the 'normal meaning' and the 'inner meaning' of scriptural images: 'Thus by whatever design, it pleased the eternal wisdom to insinuate itself into the minds of the godly, and, if I may use the expression, to deceive the minds of the profane through images sketched in outline only' (641; cf n793). (ii) The second sequence – Holborn 286:6–291:12 (cf 680–90 with nn1004, 1037 below) – extends the warning already clearly given in the first edition against the misuse of Scripture. On the one hand, Erasmus notes the errors of those who take from Scripture 'only those bits that tend to justify their own inclinations' (680); the theme offered an opportunity to admonish with remarkable boldness contemporary bishops, including the pope (680–2). On the other hand, reflecting debates evident in the *Annotations* and

referring in particular to the Novatianists and the Donatists, he insisted again that heretics will never be conquered by Scriptures whose interpretation is not grounded in legitimate exegesis (684–90). (iii) Finally, in a third sequence – Holborn 292:4–293:13 (cf 691–3 with n1050 below) – Erasmus illustrates at length the hermeneutical principle articulated in *1519* that Scripture is to be interpreted not by reading passages in isolation but by comparing passages whether similar or apparently contradictory.

**6/** Holborn 298:5–303:30 (cf 700–10 with nn1093, 1137 below). Erasmus concluded the *Ratio* of *1520* by augmenting the attack on the contemporary theological education and its consequences of which he had spoken in the first edition. In this sequence of additions he once again deplored, with a passion even more heated than previously, the labyrinthine discussions of the schools, suggesting that they have the potential to shake and uproot the faith. Their style of discussion, he says, can even be heard from pulpits. It is a 'teaching that James calls "sensual" and "devilish."'[728]

**7/** Holborn 305:17–30 (cf 713 with n1147 below). The *1518/1519* conclusion was extended briefly in *1520* to lament the 'pharisees and rabbis of our times.'

### The *Ratio* of 1522 and 1523

The editions of 1522 and 1523 did not, like that of 1520, make the *Ratio* a significantly fresh work. While additions in each case expanded the *Ratio* by about five percent, they were chiefly illustrative and explanatory, reiterating and emphasizing points already made, and doing so most heavily in the latter part of the work within the discussion of biblical interpretation. We should note, however, the considerable effort Erasmus made in *1522* and *1523* to elaborate and refine the relation between the allegorical and historical senses of Scripture (cf 659–75 with nn898, 976 below). Two additions in *1523* especially catch attention. To the discussion in *1520* of the sacred Doctors whose tenets were either unnecessary or destructive, Erasmus added a further exemplification questioning the validity of the 'tenets' on 'indissoluble marriage' (cf 543 with n271 below). Second, in *1523* Erasmus added an unforgettably absurd anecdote to illustrate the 'idle tales' that issue from the pulpit. Lamenting the unrestrained licence of the 'pulpeteers,' who, in following the 'exhibitionism' of the 'mateologians' of the university, proclaimed papal

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728 Cf James 3:15; and *Ratio* 706–7 with n1122.

indulgences, the power of the pope, and the praises of saints, he recalled the preacher who extolled the virtues of Catherine of Siena: a young woman whose love for Christ led to an intimacy so close that she had extramarital relations with Jesus who came to her bedroom. Erasmus concluded: 'I report this … to advise theologians not to speak with absurdity like this in front of the people, some of whom are intelligent' (cf 708–9 below).

## VII THE THIRD EDITION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT (1519–22)

As we shall see, a third edition of the New Testament was in view by at least the autumn of 1519 and was published in February 1522, a period of time that coincided in part with the composition and publication of the *Paraphrases* on the apostolic Epistles.[729] The contextual framework already described for that enterprise therefore serves, to a considerable extent, for the third edition of the New Testament. We may recall the central issues: the election and coronation of Charles; the public quarrel with Edward Lee; Erasmus' volatile relations with the faculty of theology at Louvain, where Erasmus continued to reside until the summer of 1521; the challenges of the Collegium Trilingue; the rising opposition to Luther; and Erasmus' entanglement with the Lutheran 'problem.' We have yet to consider several developments that occurred in the course of 1521.

Erasmus' relation to Luther continued to remain ambiguous in the minds of many people. He refused to satisfy the request of those who asked him to write against Luther. On 13 September 1520 he had written to the pope to clarify his position: he was not a supporter of Luther, and if he had not demonstrated his opposition by writing against him, it was because he was not suited to the task; he complained that the hostility against him was really rooted in his detractors' hatred of the humanities, which they wished to destroy by connecting his case with that of Luther.[730] He refused to be present at the Diet of Worms from January to May 1521. To Georgius Spalatinus he gave his 'uncertain health' as the reason for his absence,[731] but he seems to have feared his enemies at the court and wrote to several

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729 Autumn 1518 (1 and 2 Corinthians) to January 1521 (Hebrews)
730 Cf Ep 1143.
731 Cf Ep 1192A:21–3.

prominent members of the court to clear away any suspicion that he was a supporter of Luther.[732] In June/July 1521 he wrote directly to the theologians of Louvain to address the 'offence' evidently taken by Latomus from the *Consilium* of November 1520 that he had written (with Johannes Faber) as a plan for making peace with Luther.[733] In the letter Erasmus noted the virtual violence he had suffered from both Lutherans and Catholics: '[Luther's] opponents, monks especially, have attacked me so savagely that even had I previously been Luther's enemy, their hostility might have driven me to join him. On the other side, I observe that Luther's supporters have done all they could to drag me in by force …'[734]

In late May 1521 Erasmus had taken up residence in the spacious house of Pieter Wichmans in Anderlecht, a suburb of Brussels, where he stayed for much of the summer.[735] In retrospect, Erasmus spoke of this as a retreat for the sake of his health,[736] but Anderlecht also offered a refuge from the hostility he felt at Louvain. Indeed, he granted that even his enemies supposed he was 'taking cover.'[737] Proximity to Brussels also facilitated access to the court. Charles had returned from the Diet of Worms to Brussels on June 14,[738] and Erasmus once again played out his role as councillor. He told Marcus Laurinus that when Charles was in Brussels 'scarcely a day passed when I did not ride through the marketplace and past the court, and I was often at court myself, a thing not very habitual with me.'[739] In August he followed the court to Bruges,[740] a move that proved to be very advantageous for the third edition of the New Testament.

Charles had gone to Bruges to negotiate an alliance that would bring English support for the war with France.[741] The war had been precipitated by the disappointment felt by Francis I in losing the imperial election to Charles;

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732 Cf Ep 1195:85–149 and introduction.
733 Cf Ep 1217:19–21. For the *Consilium* see 'New Testament Scholarship' 158 with n622.
734 Ep 1217:121–4. For Erasmus' perception in August 1521 of hostility from the Lutheran side see also Ep 1225:302–11.
735 Cf Ep 1208 introduction.
736 Cf eg Epp 1302:20–1 and 1342:25–6.
737 Cf Ep 1342:22–9 and Ep 1208 introduction.
738 Cf Ep 1342:73 with n19.
739 Ep 1342:73–5
740 Charles was in Bruges from 7 to 25 August (Ep 1223 introduction).
741 Cf Ep 1223 introduction.

it had begun with French campaigns against the emperor in late 1520 and by the summer of 1521 was in full progress.[742] Indeed, in September 1521 Charles himself laid siege to Tournai.[743] Erasmus looked upon the war with great anxiety.[744] In fact, the war between the monarchs would become a matter of great importance in the dedication of his *Paraphrases* on the Gospels.

**Preparation and Publication of the Third Edition: A Chronology**

During March 1519, the very month the second edition of the New Testament was published, Erasmus spent a period of time at Mechelen at the request of the regent Margaret to consult about a tutor for the young Prince Ferdinand, brother of Charles. Possibly at this time he discovered in the library there the *codex aureus*, a manuscript of the Gospels whose letters were written in gold and to which he would refer consistently in his third edition. Such a discovery might have prompted him even then to consider the possibility of a third edition.[745]

In October 1519, six months after the publication of the second edition, Erasmus gives us the first clear indication that he was planning a third edition of his New Testament. Writing to three Englishmen, Thomas Lupset, Cuthbert Tunstall, and John Fisher, Erasmus sought copies of the notes he was now expecting Lee to publish, which, he said, he wished to have at hand as he was now preparing a third edition of his *Novum Testamentum*.[746] Lee's notes were published in Paris in February 1520; Erasmus had acquired a copy by late February and, in spite of a professed disinclination to do so, responded at once with the *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* and the three books of the *Responsio ad annotationes Lei*.[747] The latter became the occasion for a preliminary formulation of explanations and arguments that would appear sometimes in a more finished form, sometimes almost verbatim in the third

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742 Cf Ep 1228:58–9 with n12 and Ep 1223 introduction.

743 Cf Ep 1302:30–1 with n10.

744 Erasmus lamented the conflict between the two monarchs, and throughout the autumn of 1521 commented on its disastrous effects; cf Epp 1237:27–9, 1238:63–81, 1248:25–32.

745 If so, it is unlikely that he worked through the manuscript at this time since he does not refer to it in his *Responsio ad annotationes Lei* in the spring of 1520.

746 Cf Epp 1026:14–20 (Lupset, 16 October), 1029:32–4 (Tunstall, 16 October), and 1030:25–43 (Fisher, 17 October).

747 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 152 with nn586, 589, 591.

edition,[748] and thus represents one of the earliest stages in the composition of the material peculiar to that edition.[749]

There is good reason to believe that between April and August 1520 Erasmus received some quotations from Chrysostom's *Homilies on Acts* that were incorporated into his third edition of the New Testament. In a *1527* addition to the annotation on Acts 1:1 (*primum quidem sermonem*) Erasmus reported that for the third edition friends had sent him on paper 'certain things' from the *Homilies*. It is probable that these were gathered originally as a resource for his response to Lee. In the *Responsio ad annotationes Lei* 2 there are in the notes on Acts (Notes 114–36) eleven citations from Chrysostom's *Homilies*. None of these appears in the Hillen edition of April / May, nine appear in the later Basel edition of May / August, and two appear first in the edition of 1522. All of these references are found in the third edition of the New Testament, cited in a manner similar to that in the *Responsio ad annotationes Lei*. We may suppose that as soon as Erasmus decided to respond to Lee he sent requests to friends who were in a position to locate certain passages. None arrived for the first edition of April / May, all but two arrived for the later Basel edition of May / August.[750]

About the same time, Erasmus came upon a manuscript of the commentaries of the Venerable Bede on the Catholic Epistles from which he drew extensively for the third edition of the New Testament. He discovered this

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748 For longer passages copied largely verbatim see the review of 'major additions' to the annotations of *1522*, 206–9 below. Some short insertions of *1522* are also virtually identical to statements in the *Responsio ad annotationes Lei*; cf eg the *1522* addition to the annotation on Acts 21:21 (*neque secundum consuetudinem ingredi*) and *Responsio ad annotationes Lei* 2 (Note 130) CWE 72 260.

749 The *Responsio ad annotationes Lei* was published in April / May 1520. Earlier yet was Erasmus' *Apologia de 'In principio erat sermo*,' first published in February 1520, in which he replied to the criticism – notably from Henry Standish – of his translation in John 1:1 where he changed the Vulgate's *verbum* to *sermo* (cf Ep 1072 introduction). The February edition was considerably enlarged in August of the same year, retaining much of the argument and frequently reflecting the language of the February edition. The *1522* addition to the annotation on the verse (*erat verbum*) is essentially a precis of the evidence offered in the August edition of the *Apologia de 'In principio erat sermo'* validating Erasmus'change, with the language of the February edition still resonant in it; cf CWE 73 xii–xix.

750 In the third edition of the New Testament there are in the annotations on Acts only two references to Chrysostom not found in the *Responsio ad annotationes Lei*. For the Basel edition and its date of publication see 'New Testament Scholarship' 153 with n596.

manuscript in the library of the Minorites in Antwerp[751] and used it for the composition of his *Paraphrases* on the Catholic Epistles. Erasmus began to compose the *Paraphrases* on 1 and 2 Peter and Jude immediately after he had published the first edition of the *Responsio ad annotationes Lei*. This manuscript is cited only once in Erasmus' response to Lee, in an addition to the May / August (Basel) edition, where Erasmus acknowledges his debt to the Minorite library.[752] It seems likely that the manuscript was available to Erasmus shortly after April 1520. Notably, the passage written for the *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 3* (Note 25) – a discussion of the famous Johannine comma – is repeated almost verbatim, including the citation from Bede, in the *1522* addition to the annotation on John 5:7–8, thus indicating another step in the sequence of composition of the third edition of the New Testament.

After the initial indications in his correspondence of October 1519, Erasmus' letters contain no explicit references to the preparation of a third edition until December 1520, more than a year later.[753] This was a period during which Erasmus was not only distracted by the many concerns we have noted but also engaged in the composition of his *Paraphrases* on the apostolic Epistles. By mid-December 1520 he had completed the *Paraphrase* on James, and there remained to paraphrase only the Epistles to 1–3 John and to Hebrews. He now turned purposefully to his New Testament. On 20 December he wrote to Maarten Lips, who had evidently asked Erasmus for his copy of the Aldine Bible, that he needed the Bible 'in the revision of the New Testament.' He was at the same time 'engaged in revising the text of Augustine' and hoped Lips could send him something from the African bishop.[754] Lips apparently sent Erasmus the Bible, and three months later, in March 1521, Erasmus was able to return the Bible to Lips – but he noted that

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751 Cf the annotation on 1 Pet 2:1 (*rationabiles sine dolo lac*). Erasmus was frequently in Antwerp during 1519 and 1520. For some of the circumstances that encouraged Erasmus' occasional presence in Antwerp at this time see 'New Testament Scholarship' 151–3 and, further, Ep 1061:725–8. But Erasmus also went to Antwerp (where his friend Pieter Gillis lived) for recreational purposes; cf Ep 999 introduction.

752 Cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei* CWE 72 406 with n291.

753 The expression in several letters of plans to go to Germany and Rome may imply an intention to publish a third edition but offers no explicit evidence of this; cf Epp 1078 n15 (March 1520) and 1143 n22 (September 1520).

754 Ep 1174:16–21

he needed it 'soon after Easter.' At the same time he returned to Lips the copy of Augustine he had borrowed, the *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*.[755]

The *Contra Faustum Manichaeum*, although borrowed for the Augustine edition, entered decisively into Erasmus' revision of the New Testament. Erasmus had cited the *Contra Faustum* in the 1519 edition of the *Annotations*, but infrequently, and nowhere in the annotations on Romans. By *1535* there were at least ten references to this work in those annotations, all of them added in the 1522 edition.[756] Thus we may conjecture that these references were added in the early months of 1521 to Erasmus' notes in preparation for the third edition. The letter to Lips also suggests that some, perhaps many, of the quotations from the Aldine Bible were added after Easter, that is, in April 1521. The Aldine Bible, published in 1518, was not yet available to Erasmus when he was preparing the second edition of the New Testament.[757] He soon acquired his own copy, which he used in the *Responsio ad annotationes Lei*. In that work, however, the appeal to the Aldine Bible is primarily referential, whereas in the third edition of the New Testament numerous sizeable passages are quoted from the Greek Septuagint to substantiate references made to it in previous editions.

In Erasmus' letters no further references to the third edition appear until 27 May, when the 'first part' – no doubt the text volume – had already been sent to Basel.[758] There remained yet the volume of annotations, which Erasmus probably retained in order to be at the press while they were

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755 Cf Ep 1189:6–12. In 1521 Easter occurred on 31 March.

756 Cf Index of Patristic, Medieval, and Renaissance References CWE 56 457.

757 But cf *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 44–5. Erasmus says that he himself did not have the Aldine Bible at hand when he was preparing the second edition, but he had asked his friends at Basel to restore from it the lacuna at the end of Revelation. In fact, no significant changes from the first edition were made in that passage. Erasmus seems to have assumed that the Aldine Bible offered a significant additional witness to the text of the New Testament, but for the close relation between the Aldine Bible and Erasmus' Greek text of 1516 see CWE 72 33–4 with n167; *Contra morosos* paragraph 57 with n157; and ASD VI-4 12–13. The Aldine Bible, published in 1518 by the firm of Aldo Manuzio (hence its name), provided a Greek text of both the Old Testament (ie the Septuagint) and the New.

758 Cf Ep 1206:70–3 with n9. In Ep 1205:21 (24 May 1521) Erasmus speaks of heavy labours he 'could not escape.' Peter Bietenholz, the letter's annotator, suggests (n8) that these 'labours' might be a reference to the preparation of the third edition.

printing. In fact, events conspired both to enable and to require him to make major additions to the annotations during the summer of 1521.

In the first place, Erasmus acquired during this summer a copy of Diego López Zúñiga's *Annotationes contra Erasmum Roterodamum in defensionem tralationis Novi Testamenti* 'Annotations Directed against Erasmus of Rotterdam in Defence of the [Vulgate] Translation of the New Testament.' The book had been published in 1520, 'probably before 21 June,' and Erasmus had heard of it by August of that year.[759] He did not, however, acquire a copy until almost a year later – sometime before 26 June 1521, when he had already moved to Anderlecht.[760] By 23 September Erasmus had completed his reply to López Zúñiga's book,[761] responding to well over two hundred notes López Zúñiga had compiled. At least 125 of these seem to be reflected in the *1522* additions to Erasmus' *Annotations*. In some cases the comments in the *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae* and the annotations of the third edition of the New Testament are verbatim identical.[762]

It is possible that in responding to López Zúñiga Erasmus added notes to the third edition of the New Testament more or less in tandem with the composition of his *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae*. There are some indications, however, that at least some additions were made to the third edition of

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759 For the date of publication see ASD IX-2 21; for Erasmus' knowledge of the book see the correspondence between Vergara and López Zúñiga, Ep 1:16–25 with nn6 and 7 (CWE 8 337). For the early stages of the conflict between Erasmus and López Zúñiga see Ep 1128:4–6 with n2; and for a full account, ASD IX-2 13–34.

760 Cf Ep 1216:2.

761 Erasmus'response was given the title *Apologia respondens ad ea quae Iacobus Lopis Stunica taxaverat in prima dumtaxat Novi Testamenti aeditione* 'An Apology in Response to the Criticisms Diego López Zúñiga Directed against the First Edition Only of the New Testament.' The title pointed clearly to the fact that López Zúñiga's book had not taken into account Erasmus' second edition of the New Testament. CWE adopts the short form of the title *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae*.

762 See for example the annotation on Matt 21:42 (*verebuntur forte filium meum*), a significant portion of which was composed first for *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* (Note 13), then copied verbatim into both Erasmus' annotation and his *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae* (ASD IX-2 104:901–10). See also the annotation on 1 John 5:7–8 (*tres sunt qui testimonium dant in coelo*), where the *1522* addition is largely identical to the comments in the *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae*; indeed, a small portion of those comments appeared verbatim in the annotation, apparently copied directly from the Basel (May/August) 1520 edition of *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 3* (Note 25); cf CWE 72 406 with n291 and ASD IX-2 254:467–73. Cf 209 below.

the New Testament before their counterparts found a place in the *Apologia*. Thus Erasmus says in the *Apologia* that he is quoting from the third edition of his annotation on Matthew 26:31 (*percutiam pastorem*) in order to take advantage of labour already undergone.[763] A comparison of the annotation with the *Apology* to López Zúñiga on the problematic text of 1 John 5:7–8 likewise suggests at this point the priority of the annotation. Erasmus had, possibly in the course of his quarrel with Lee, written to Paolo Bombace in Rome for textual evidence on 1 John 5:7–8 in the papal library.[764] Bombace, however, did not reply until 18 June 1521, and due to mis-routing Erasmus seems not to have received the letter in Anderlecht until after mid-September.[765] Although Bombace included in his letter the witness of Codex Vaticanus, no reference is made in the *1522* annotation to the citation from it, reference to which had to wait for the fourth edition. Now, the passage in question in the *Apology* to López Zúñiga is generally verbatim identical to that in the annotation, but it does include the evidence of Vaticanus. One might infer from this that the annotation was completed before the letter from Bombace arrived, too late for the evidence from Codex Vaticanus to be inserted in the annotation, but not too late for an addition to the *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae*.[766]

In the second place, Erasmus' move to Anderlecht and his attendance at the court gave him access to biblical sources that he was able to examine during the summer of 1521 and from these add new information to the annotations. The Carthusian monastery near Anderlecht made available to Erasmus a copy of the *Glossa ordinaria*. While for the second edition he had drawn minimally upon the *Gloss*, perhaps from memory, in the third edition he explicitly and frequently identifies it as a source. Further, when he was with the court in Bruges that summer, he stayed with a friend Marcus Laurinus, a friend and dean of the College of St Donatian. Through Laurinus he had

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763 Cf ASD IX-2 108:987–9; and for the quotation from the annotation on Matthew see ibidem 108:990–110:32.

764 In his response to Lee Erasmus refers to a manuscript in the papal library, *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 3* (Note 25) CWE 72 407 n296. We infer that just as Erasmus had solicited from friends citations from Chrysostom's *Homilies on Acts*, he had also solicited from Bombace the manuscript evidence for the text of 1 John 5:7–8 in the papal library.

765 Erasmus acknowledged receipt of the quotation in a letter to Bombace of 23 September; cf Epp 1213 introduction and 1236:49–58.

766 For the passage in question see the *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae* ASD IX-2 252–8 (Codex Vaticanus cited 256:505–7). On Codex Vaticanus see the *Contra morosos* paragraph 41a with n121.

access to the college's library, which had several manuscripts of the Latin Bible.[767] Erasmus consulted these diligently, frequently adding in his annotations their witness to the biblical text. These and the *codex aureus* constituted the major new witnesses from biblical manuscripts cited in the third edition.

In the third place, at some point in early to mid-September 1521 Erasmus heard a report that Nicolaas Baechem, lecturing on St Paul's Epistles in Louvain, had accused him of introducing heresy by his text of 1 Corinthians 15:51.[768] The report reached Erasmus in time to add to his annotation on the verse (*omnes quidem resurgemus*) a very extensive defence of his reading, which proved to be a first draft for his *Apologia de loco 'Omnes quidem'* that was hastily appended to a collection of Erasmus' *Apologiae*, published by Froben in February 1522.[769] On 23 September Erasmus wrote both that the New Testament 'revised and enlarged is now printing a third time in Basel,' and that he was still 'entirely engrossed in revising the New Testament.'[770]

After 14 October Erasmus left his idyllic retreat in Anderlecht and returned to Louvain. From there he set out for Basel on 28 October, no doubt taking with him his book of annotations, now revised for the third edition.[771] He arrived in Basel on 15 November.[772] He was still 'busy on the New Testament' on 14 December, which, he said, 'was "coming to birth" for the third time.'[773] The work was published in February 1522.[774]

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767 Erasmus was in Bruges in the summer of 1519 and again in the summer of 1520, but a *1522* addition to his annotation on Matt 3:16 (*baptizatus autem Iesus*), in which he says, 'When I was recently in Bruges … I examined the library of that very old college commonly called St Donatian's,' indicates that it was not until 1521 that he effectively used the library of St Donatian. But cf ASD VI-5 6.

768 Erasmus followed what is now the preferred reading, 'We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.' There are several variants; the Vulgate reads, 'We shall all rise, but we shall not all be changed.'

769 Cf Ep 1235:6–12 with n5. The response to Baechem thus provides a parallel with the response to Henry Standish (cf n749) above, the two forming the first and last traceable work in the composition of the annotations for the third edition of the New Testament.

770 Cf respectively Epp 1235:38–9 and 1236:124; the former may be a somewhat careless reference to the text volume, the latter to the *Annotations* volume.

771 Cf Epp 1241A introduction, 1242 introduction, and 1233 n28.

772 Cf Ep 1242 introduction.

773 Cf Epp 1249:7–8 and 1248:5–7.

774 Cf Ep 1267:32–3 with n7.

## The New Testament of 1522

### *Formal Aspects*

In form and physical appearance the two volumes that constituted the third edition were very similar to the New Testament of 1519. As in *1519*, these were folio volumes with attractive borders marking the chief divisions. The introductory material contained both narrative prefaces and tabular information, although, as we shall see, there were major omissions from the prefaces of *1519*. At the end of the second volume the letter of Oecolampadius was omitted, and a subject index, so generously supplied in *1519*, was not provided.[775] In spite of numerous changes in the translation, the pagination of the text volume followed exactly that of *1519* for almost its entire length, each column beginning with the same text on the same page number as in the previous edition. Thus from the first verse of Matthew to 1 John 2:24 both editions have exactly 518 pages. Thereafter to the end the pagination differs slightly, so that the text of the 1519 edition has a total of 565 pages, that of the 1522 edition 562.

### *Volume 1*

#### 1/ THE PREFACES

The introductory material of the 1522 edition is notable for two omissions. First, the *Ratio* no longer appeared among the prefaces. We have already seen that it had been greatly enlarged in 1520 and had become highly successful as a publication separate from the New Testament.[776] As such, it would find a place among the 'works of religious instruction' in the 1524 expanded edition of Erasmus' 'Catalogue of Works.'[777] Second, the illustration of the Trinity along with the Creed in Greek that Lee had found so offensive in the 1519 edition was omitted, perhaps an act of irenicism.[778]

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775 Oecolampadius had left Basel in late 1518 (Ep 904:36–8), to which, however, he would return in 1522. Two tracts that he published in 1521 showed that by then he had broken with the Catholic tradition; cf CEBR III 25. For Oecolampadius' letter see 'Prefaces and Letters' 773–7. For his later role in the Reformation in Basel see 'New Testament Scholarship' 259–60.

776 Cf Ep 1341A:787–9 with n217. For the enlargement of the 1520 edition see 'New Testament Scholarship' 185–9.

777 Cf Ep 1341A:1575–95.

778 In *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* Erasmus had, with a half-hearted defence, already in 1520 virtually conceded to Lee its omission in the 1522 edition; cf CWE 72 42–3 and 'New Testament Scholarship' 121–2 with n526.

The other pieces prefacing the New Testament remained in *1522* substantially as they were in *1519*. A single sentence, lamenting the austerity of an education that made bitter and morose the sweet philosophy of Christ, was added to the *Paraclesis*.[779] To the *Contra morosos* a few clauses were added for emphasis and clarification, and one or two additions were pointedly admonitory. Erasmus indulged in a sneer at those who took the pope's authority seriously when it was to their advantage, and he recalled Augustine's advice to search for the genuine reading of a passage of Scripture in the first translation made of it, for example the Septuagint for the Hebrew.[780] Only two significant changes were made in the seven indexes ('Interpolations' #2 added and #14 omitted); indeed, remarkably, the entries in the *1522* indexes were actually keyed to the pagination of the *1519* annotations – surely a significant challenge to the user! In these circumstances it is not surprising to find that the addition in *1522* of 'Interpolations' #2 was inserted without any page reference. Such treatment of the indexes, as well as the lack noted above of a subject index, might suggest that the preparation of the edition was hastily concluded. The Eusebian canon followed the indexes, and the prefaces concluded, as in *1519*, with the captions for the Greek and Latin chapters of the Gospels and with Jerome's 'Lives' of the evangelists.

**2/** THE GREEK TEXT AND LATIN TRANSLATION

Further changes appeared in the Greek text of *1522*. Almost all of them were small and of little hermeneutical significance: corrections of spelling, the occasional addition of a personal pronoun, changes of mood or tense of verbs. The third edition, however, is famous for a remarkable change in the Greek text of 1 John 5:7–8, where the Vulgate had included the 'heavenly witnesses': 'There are three who witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one.' These words are excluded from virtually all Greek manuscripts, and consequently from Erasmus' text in the first two editions. Well before he had received López Zúñiga's critique, he had attempted to meet the objection of Lee.[781] In responding to Lee, Erasmus had confirmed his general principle that he translated the Greek text he printed. He conceded to

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779 Cf *Paraclesis* 421 with n101.

780 Cf *Contra morosos* paragraphs 58 and 70.

781 Cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 3* (Note 25) CWE 72 403–19. For López Zúñiga see 196 with n762 above. For the omission of the comma in the first edition see 'New Testament Scholarship' 45 with n200 above; and for Erasmus' discussion of the comma in his controversy with the Spanish monks, 'New Testament Scholarship' 282–3 with nn1197.

Lee, however, that if he had found the 'heavenly witnesses' in a single manuscript, he would have added it. Some time after the debate with Lee had been concluded, and possibly as late as the summer of 1521,[782] Erasmus came into possession of the text as found in the famous Greek Codex Montfortianus, which includes the 'heavenly witnesses.' Though Erasmus consequently included this portion in his *1522* text and in all editions thereafter, he noted that in his view the manuscript had deliberately accommodated the Vulgate text. Although it has long been the common view that the codex was almost certainly a forgery, made specifically in answer to Erasmus' statement of general principle in his response to Lee, Andrew Brown has argued that the codex might well have been completed in the second decade of the sixteenth century without Erasmus in view.[783] In any case, the 'heavenly witnesses' passed into the *textus receptus* and appears in both the Douay-Rheims Version and the Authorized Version.

In the translation far fewer changes were made in the third edition than in the editions of 1516 and 1519. In relation to the translation of *1519*, the largest number of changes was made in the Gospels, particularly in Matthew, relatively few changes were made in the Epistles, and about a dozen in the Apocalypse. In fact there are nearly as many changes in Matthew as in all the apostolic Epistles taken together.[784] In a surprising number of cases Erasmus reverted from the *1519* translation to the Vulgate. Some changes are relatively minor: a change in orthography, the addition of a phrase previously omitted by accident and required by the corresponding Greek, or, as in the translation of Matthew 16:19, the inversion of the 'bind-loose' clauses to follow the sequence 'loose-bind' in the Greek and the Vulgate. The edition continued to illustrate the occasional lack of coordination between text and translation and between translation and annotation. The translation of Luke 19:30 offers a particularly interesting case in point. In *1516* and *1519* Erasmus' Greek text had read, 'You will find a colt tied,' while his translation read, 'You will find the colt of an ass tied' (also VG, DV). In *1522* Erasmus wrote an annotation on the expression *pullum asinae*, noting that *asinae* was not in the Greek text,

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782 Cf ASD IX-2 258:534–44 with 534n.

783 Cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 3* CWE 72 403 n279 and the reference there to the article by H.J. de Jonge on the comma; for the case made by Andrew Brown see the lengthy 'Excursus' in ASD VI-4 27–111.

784 Different methods of counting changes may yield slightly different results, but the picture will remain generally the same. I count approximately fifty-five changes in the translation of Matthew, approximately sixty in all the apostolic Epistles.

and he could not understand how it had made its way into the translation of *1519*. In spite of such strong words, the translation remained unchanged until the edition of *1535*!

If some changes were of little import, most changes had some genuine significance and reflect Erasmus' continuing effort to elicit the finer shades of meaning implied by the Greek, or to express the Greek in 'better' Latin, that is, in Latin normally used by the standard Latin authors of antiquity. In Matthew 2:8 and 11 Erasmus returned to the Vulgate, replacing his translation of *1516* and *1519 repereritis … repererunt* 'you have found … they have found' with *inveneritis … invenerunt* to reflect his own view that in good Latin the former was used to find something unexpectedly, the latter to find something sought, which is clearly the case here.[785] In the phrase 'white as light' (Matthew 17:2 RSV) Erasmus replaced the *alba* 'white,' found in the Vulgate and his translation in the previous editions, with *candida* 'white,' since the former implied a dead white, the latter a 'shining white.'[786] Better Latin also meant less Grecizing. Hence in Matthew 23:6 Erasmus had before *1522* retained the Vulgate phrase *primas cathedras in synagogis* 'the best seats in the synagogues' (RSV), a phrase that was little more than a transliteration of the Greek. In *1522* Erasmus Latinized the expression: *primo sedere loco in conciliis* 'to sit first place in assemblies.' And yet in *1522*, as previously, he made no attempt to perfect his translation in a systematic and thorough way. A Vulgate phrase that is 'improved' in one place is left untouched in another.

Two expressions are of special interest. López Zúñiga had challenged Erasmus' translation of the Greek *μετανοέω* 'I repent' by the Latin verb *resipisco* in Matthew 3:2.[787] As a reply to López Zúñiga, Erasmus recognized in his annotation on the verse (*poenitentiam agite*) that Pliny had indeed used the Vulgate expression – but followed by the genitive case. Accordingly, in *1522* Erasmus changed *resipiscite* (*1519*) to *poenitentiam agite vitae prioris*, literally, 'do repentance of your former life,' thus supplying the necessary genitive 'of your former life' without explicit warrant from the Greek text.[788] Erasmus had second thoughts also about the proper translation for the biblical expression

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785 Erasmus' Greek text at 2:11 read *εὗρον* 'they found' (VG, DV); the preferred reading is *εἶδον* 'they saw.' For the distinction between the two Latin words for 'found' see CWE 50 126 n3 and CWE 48 111 n20.

786 Cf the annotation on Matt 17:1 (*duxit illos*), which includes a note on the expression in Matt 17:2; cf also L&S *candidus*.

787 Cf *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae* ASD IX-2 86:537–52.

788 For the expression with the genitive see the annotation ASD VI-5 112:67–9, 3–7; for other examples of the same construction introduced in the *1522* text see ER Luke 10:13, Acts 2:38, and Rev 16:9. Cf *Ratio* 522 with n167.

'in the name of'; indeed, he seemed to be deeply puzzled by it.[789] In *1519* he had frequently adopted the preposition *sub*, but he was clearly not satisfied with it. He noticed that 'not everyone liked it' and eliminated it in *1522*, generally restoring *in*, as used by the Vulgate.[790] These changes point to an integrity of purpose as Erasmus sought to provide a translation answering to his stated ideals.

### *Volume II: The Annotations*

#### 1/ GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

More than 120 new annotations are introduced in the edition of 1522, and many additions also are made to existing annotations, some very short, some of considerable length. These in no way reflect any departure by Erasmus from the original vision of his work as primarily philological. His primary concern remains the justification of his translation particularly by appeal to sources, to good Latin usage, to the semantics of the Greek words, to sentence construction, to clarity and the elimination of ambiguity. He takes advantage of the occasion to respond to critics, to indulge in laudatory appreciation of real or potential benefactors, to express his own often deeply emotional response to persons and events, to force under the lurid light of his acerbic criticism – stunning often in its laconic brevity – the distortions evident in social and ecclesiastical customs, as well as in the lives of individuals. These comments on the life around him give to the annotations a lively and human face, a glimpse of which may be caught in a brief sampling.

In the third edition even the discussion of manuscript sources can become an occasion for praise – and blame! Reflection on Erasmus' discovery in Mechelen of the *codex aureus*, a manuscript written entirely in gold letters, prompted the unstinted praise of the royal Burgundian family, above all of Margaret, Charles' aunt, regent of the Netherlands, whose library possessed the codex. Erasmus describes her as a woman on whom every virtue had been abundantly bestowed, far beyond what we would expect of her sex – if only men would imitate her example and spend their free time in reading good books rather than in wasting it in absurd and empty fables![791] Similarly, in describing the Donatian codices, Bruges is characterized as 'the most

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789 Cf the *1522* annotation on Acts 4:17 (*in nomine hoc*).

790 For these changes see the expression especially in John 16:23–6 and Acts 4–5.

791 Cf the annotation on Matt 1:3 (*de Thamar*); also the prefatory letter to the *Annotations* in 'Prefaces and Letters' 783 with n6 and the reference there to changes in the edition of 1522.

flourishing city of the present day,' the College of Donatian as a place where 'still today traces of the ancient knowledge and learning are found,' and the dean Marcus Laurinus as a man 'outstanding in every virtue.' The books are presented to view in impressive detail: some whose writing dated them back eight hundred years, one very old, worn out by use, mutilated and torn; some, however, of venerable antiquity, had perished due to the neglect of certain people – an opportune point for an acid comment: '… as now generally is the character of priests who would rather fill their stomachs than their heads,[792] and who care more about their income than about their books.'[793] Even the Rhodian manuscript, López Zúñiga's talisman, which Erasmus regarded as corrected according to the Vulgate, is not criticized without a word of praise for its possessor, Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, whom Erasmus honoured 'because the cardinal honoured both piety and all good studies.'[794]

Time and experience never made Erasmus less sensitive to criticism, and his reaction to it not only adds a taste of ginger to the annotations of *1522* but also recreates something of the emotional drama of his own inner life. There was the 'rabble-rouser' who publicly charged Erasmus with calling the gospel 'nothing but old wives tales,'[795] 'a man outstanding in his Dominican garb, a bachelor of sacred theology, a preacher of gospel doctrine.'[796] There were the monks who brought before Cardinal Schiner a charge of heresy against Erasmus because in the Magnificat he had written (so they said) 'Abraham's seeds' rather than 'Abraham's seed.' Though in this case Erasmus was able to exonerate himself when he dined with the cardinal, this story represented only the tip of the iceberg, for there were countless similar stories floating about.[797] In impulsive and unrestrained language, Erasmus calls such critics buffoons and beasts who bawl out slanders.[798]

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792 Literally, 'inclined more to dishes than to books,' with a play on the Latin *patinis* 'dishes' and *paginis* 'pages'

793 Cf the annotation on Matt 3:16 (*baptizatus autem Iesus*).

794 Cf the annotation on 2 Cor 2:3 (*tristitiam super tristitiam*). On the Rhodian manuscript see ASD IX-2 146:723n and 246:343–5.

795 'Old wives tales': *fabulae aniles*

796 Cf the annotation on Matt 17:3 (*cum eo loquentes*).

797 Cf a *1522* addition to the annotation on Luke 1:55 (*Abraham et semini*): 'I would not have believed it if I had not discovered hundreds of other tales of the same sort.' In 1520, describing the behaviour of Henry Standish, Erasmus had expressed the same sentiment in a similar way: 'I could tell you hundreds of tales of the same sort,' Ep 1126:247–8.

798 Cf the annotation on Luke1:55 (*Abraham et semini*) ASD VI-5 468:647–469:655.

Indeed, his resolution that the third edition would be his last derived directly, he said, from the demoralization effected by such slanders.[799]

Erasmus' criticism of church and society, as well as of the theologians who gave direction to the church, had been an integral part of the annotations of both *1516* and *1519*, often bitterly vitriolic in *1519*. In the edition of 1522 Erasmus did not retreat from such attacks but often added to them remarks that amplified, explained, sometimes intensified, sometimes qualified what he had previously said. He had cried out against those who went to war against the Turks to kill them and 'take them dead.' He adds caustically a brief but more sinister motive in *1522*: 'We are going after the Turks to get their wealth more than to get the Turks themselves.'[800] In a bitter attack on the church in *1519* he had lamented the multitude of regulations through which the church tyrannized the Christian plebs. In *1522* he amplified by drawing out the dubious history of the church's definitions: beginning as probable opinions, they found their way through books into the popular arena, became the subjects of popular sermons, then became confirmed, and finally reached the state of defined doctrine.[801] But the same annotation concludes with a qualification, perhaps with an eye to the political and religious turmoil prevalent by 1521. Evangelical charity, which frees us from tyrannical regulations, can bear all things, indeed must bear even tyrannical princes if necessary, since tumult and revolution must be avoided at all costs. A *1522* addition to the annotation on 1 Timothy 1:6 (*in vaniloquium*), where Erasmus' hostility to the theologians' 'quibbles' was already patent, seasons the hostility with mockery when Erasmus lists in a sing-song manner the interminable efforts of theologians to find the right word to express the union of the two natures of Christ: *compositus*, *conflatus*, *commixtus*, *conglutinatus*, *coagmentatus*, *ferruminatus*, *copulatus*! But then he adds in full seriousness a colourful image from Chrysostom, who found in the philosophy of Plato an enigmatic intricacy that was in fact destructive, precisely like a painting whose beauty delays a soldier fleeing from battle. A similar danger arises from the intricate arguments of the scholastic theologians.

The addition to the annotation on 1 Timothy 1:6 no doubt reflects to some degree Erasmus' deteriorating relations with the theologians of Louvain

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799 Cf the preface to the annotations on Mark. Erasmus did, of course, publish two more editions. This comment remained unchanged in both except that 'third' was replaced consecutively with 'fourth' and 'fifth'!

800 Cf the annotation on Luke 5:10 (*eris capiens*).

801 Cf the annotation on Matt 11:30 (*iugum meum suave*) ASD VI-5 207:350–208:354.

in the period from 1519 to 1521, but his portrait of theologians in the conclusion of his annotation on 1 Corinthians 15:51 (*omnes quidem resurgemus*) must have been inclusive in intent, since the *1522* addition was a response not only to Louvain's Baechem but also to others who had objected to his challenge to the Vulgate text of this verse. In painting the picture, Erasmus puts on the mask of the concerned churchman. He prays that God will give such theologians a sounder mind and give the church better patrons. For these people seek not the things of Christ but their own advantage. They love preeminence, they love titles, they look for bishoprics and abbacies, they snuff out the spark of evangelical charity, and distrusting the supports appropriate to a theologian, they turn to violence. May Christ awaken and free his people from their tyranny – 'unless he redeemed us by his blood to serve monsters like this.' The tone is irascible, the mood one of frustration.

### 2/ THE MAJOR ADDITIONS

The brief insertions into the annotations of *1522* that we have just observed invite us to see Erasmus' world with his own eyes. In *1522* there are, as in *1519*, major additions as well, additions of half a page or more. They are relatively few, less than twenty. They are predominantly philological or humanist in orientation, and they often respond to identifiable criticism, in a significant number of cases the criticism of Lee and López Zúñiga, sometimes with the same text published in the *Responsio ad annotationes Lei* and the *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae*. To review these in their canonical order will illuminate a significant aspect of the composition of the annotations in the third edition.

(i) Matthew 21:37 (*verebuntur forte filium meum*). A defence of Erasmus' Greek text, which omitted the word *forte* found in the Vulgate. The addition is a close revision of *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* (Note 13) CWE 72 104–8.

(ii) Matthew 21:42 (*et est mirabile*). Both Lee and López Zúñiga had questioned Erasmus' construction of the text, a construction that referred the adjective 'marvellous' to Christ, the cornerstone. The addition is, with a few exceptions verbatim identical to the discussion in the *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae* (cf ASD IX-2 104:901–106:934). For Lee see *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* (Note 14) CWE 72 108–9.

(iii) Matthew 26:31 (*percutiam pastorem*). Under what persona are the words spoken that are cited from Zechariah 13:7: the persona of God or of the prophet? Against the view of Jerome, Erasmus argued for the former. López Zúñiga had accused Erasmus of disrespect for Jerome. Erasmus' denial of the

charge is similar to that in the *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae*, where also he copied directly from his annotation, which, as he himself says, was 'already written in the third edition' (cf ASD IX-2 108:987–9).

(iv) Luke 1:1–3. Erasmus' translation of the preface to Luke's Gospel conceals a dramatic story of relationships among humanists, including some philological sparring with Guillaume Budé over the appropriate translation of some Greek terms.[802] The translation reached its final form in *1519*,[803] but the annotations on Luke 1:1–3 were radically revised in *1522*: a new annotation was added, making seven annotations on the three verses instead of six, and the existing order of the annotations was rearranged. This enabled the philologically problematic expressions to be fully explained each in the order in which it appeared in the Lukan narrative.

(v) Luke 19:4 (*in arborem sycomorum*). An attempt to identify precisely the 'sycamore' tree. López Zúñiga had rejected Erasmus' explanation of *1516* and *1519* (cf ASD IX-2 122:286–287n).

(vi) John 1:1 (*erat verbum*). A defence of *sermo*, which had in *1519* replaced *verbum*. The *1522* addition abbreviates the longer version (August 1520) of the defence made in the *Apologia de 'In principio erat sermo'* of February 1520, which had been directed against Henry Standish and possibly Jan Robyns.[804]

(vii) Acts 1:6 (*et convescens praecepit*). Erasmus had rejected the Vulgate's *convescens* and translated *conversans*. In support of the Vulgate, Lee had appealed to a dictionary, López Zúñiga to etymology.[805] The *1522* addition discusses the semantics and the etymology of the word.

(viii) Acts 1:26 (*et annumeratus est*). Lee had argued that Erasmus' citation of a few clauses from Augustine's *De actis cum Felice Manichaeo* was not, as

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802 For the role played by Beatus Rhenanus see the annotation (1516–27) on 1:4 (*eruditus es veritatem*) ASD VI-5 450–1:238-41 (critical apparatus); for the discussion with Budé see Epp 403, 421, and 441. Cf also 'Errors Made by the Translator' #5 in 'Errors in the Vulgate' 944 with n4.

803 With one exception: in *1522* the pronoun *hic* replaced *is* in 1:2.

804 Cf Epp 1072 introduction, 1165:19–24 with nn9, 10, and 1341A:857–61; cf also 'New Testament Scholarship 193 with n749.

805 For Lee see *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 2* (Note 115) CWE 72 245–6; for López Zúñiga, ASD IX-2 136:560–138:566 with 560–1n.

Erasmus claimed, a translation but a paraphrase. Erasmus responded in *1522* by quoting all of Acts 1:1–2:11 in an 'old,' that is, pre-Hieronymian translation Augustine had used, to show 'that the reading of the church among the Africans at any rate was different from that in use today'[806] – evidence that the readings of the Vulgate 'in use today' were not sacrosanct.

(ix) Acts 4:27 (*adversus puerum Iesum*). Erasmus demonstrates in what sense Christ can be called 'son,' as he translated the Greek here, and 'servant.' He follows the argument already directed to Lee in the *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 2* (Note 118) and denies López Zúñiga's claim that his *1516* annotation harboured the heresy of both Apollinarius and Arius (cf ASD IX-2 140:600–146:714).

(x) 1 Corinthians 4:3 (*aut ab humano die*). A defence of his view, offered on the authority of Jerome, that Paul failed to express himself in good Greek. Except for a few lines at beginning and end, the annotation and the corresponding passage in the *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae* are verbatim identical (cf ASD IX-2 180:311–182:346).

(xi) 1 Corinthians 7:39 (*liberata est a lege, cui autem vult, nubat*). Erasmus' position on divorce, evident in the long addition to this annotation in *1519*, brought criticism from Lee in his 'New Notes,' that is, those based on the *1519* edition. Erasmus' response in the considerable additions in *1522* to this annotation had already been articulated in *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 3* (Note 17); one large section is copied almost verbatim from the *Responsio*.[807] Major points: (a) it is legitimate to question the church's teaching on divorce; (b) review of ancient and medieval authorities; (c) discussion of 'consent only' as the 'necessary condition' for legitimizing marriage; (d) in the conclusion a moving account of how the deplorable state of many marriages drew Erasmus to his position on the question.

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806 Cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 2* (Note 115) CWE 72 248. For the translations Augustine used see Fitzgerald *Augustine* 101. Erasmus had made the same point in *1519*; cf 'New Testment Scholarship' n559.

807 Compare CWE 72 382–4 with Reeve-Screech 468, ASD VI-8 150:840–151:878; and see further *Ratio* 543 with n271. For a synopsis of the *1519* annotation see 'New Testament Scholarship' 147–9.

(xii) 1 Corinthians 15:51 (*omnes quidem resurgemus*). Further defence of Erasmus' text, and harsh words for two critics, Henry Standish and Nicolaas Baechem, who had publicly stated that Erasmus' text was heretical. Lee had also challenged the reading.[808]

(xiii) Ephesians 5:18 (*in quo est luxuria*). A study of the word *ἀσωτία* 'debauchery' (RSV), with a distinctly negative review of Thomas Aquinas' exposition of the word and a lament for those who know nothing but Aquinas. Thomists, perhaps especially Vincentius Theoderici of Louvain, may be in view here.[809]

(xiv) 1 John 5:7–8 (*tres sunt qui testimonium dant in coelo*). Erasmus cites extensively from Cyril, Bede, and Jerome to support his reading of *1516* and *1519*, which omits the comma; he argues that the omission of the comma does not favour the Arian cause but acknowledges the reading of the Codex Montfortianus, whose special place in the construction of Erasmus' text we noted above (200–1).

### 3/ WITNESSES AND AUTHORITIES

For the third edition Erasmus had, as we have briefly noted, some impressive new manuscripts and exegetical authorities: manuscripts such as the *codex aureus* and the codices from the library of St Donatian at Bruges; also, as a Greek printed text, the Aldine Bible; and as chiefly exegetical authorities, the writings of Cyprian and the Venerable Bede, as well as the *Gloss*. Erasmus also brought to the annotations of *1522* fresh evidence from authors abundantly used in previous editions, chiefly Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose / Ambrosiaster, Chrysostom, and Theophylact, some of these appearing in a curiously uneven way.

The Aldine Bible provided a Greek text of the New Testament and the Greek Septuagint of the Old. Accordingly, it enabled Erasmus to bring to the discussion of the correspondence between the New and the Old Testaments – one of the stated goals of the annotations – a much more effective comparison. Hitherto he had been constrained, generally, simply to offer a reference or to cite Jerome's Latin translations of the Septuagint from his commentaries on the Old Testament. He was now able to quote with some consistency the Greek of the Septuagint, and so to demonstrate the frequent correspondence

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808 Cf Ep 1126:114–42 (Standish), Ep 1235:6–12 (Baechem), and 198 with n769 above. For Lee see *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 2* (Note 162) CWE 72 280–2.

809 Cf *Apologia* 475 with n100.

between the citations from the Greek Old Testament and the Greek New Testament. He could thus persuasively negate Jerome's claim that the New Testament writers were quoting the Hebrew, and establish his own that the New Testament citations generally looked to the Septuagint. The citation of the Septuagint by the New Testament writers was, as we shall see, one of the circumstances that determined Erasmus' preference for the Septuagint, in spite of his general preference for a text in the original language.

The discovery of the *codex aureus* in Mechelen and the codices in Bruges provided Erasmus with new manuscript sources that he exploited fully. The *codex aureus*, a manuscript of the Gospels only, is cited as a textual witness about one hundred times – in the Gospels more than twice the number of citations from the Donatian manuscripts. It seems likely that Erasmus had more time to check the *codex aureus*, but he clearly regarded it as an excellent manuscript. It was a manuscript written in gold letters for liturgical use, and Erasmus nowhere notes erasures, corrections, or marginalia in it. The Donatian manuscripts offered quite another appearance. There were several manuscripts of the Gospels, one contained the Gospels, Acts, and all the Epistles, and one was a codex of only some of the Epistles.[810] Hence, in his annotations on the Epistles from Corinthians to Hebrews Erasmus speaks consistently of only one Donatian codex, but in those on Romans and the Catholic Epistles he speaks of two and sometimes notes that the one is more trustworthy than the other.[811] Both have erasures, substitutions, and marginalia, which, indeed, Erasmus occasionally found useful in determining the 'true reading.' Altogether there are about one hundred references to these manuscripts, references that occur throughout the annotations on the New

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810 In the annotations on the Gospels, Erasmus speaks variously of four, three, two, and one, frequently simply of 'several.' Cf the annotation on Matt 3:16 (*baptizatus autem Iesus*), where Erasmus says that some of these were at least eight hundred years old. In the same annotation he notes that one of the codices contained only Romans and the Catholic Epistles (ie James, the two Peters, three Johns, and Jude). In the annotations Erasmus normally cites the manuscript witnesses in the order in which he found and used them; since he generally cites the Donatian codices after the *codex aureus*, it seems probable that he had already noted the citations from the *codex aureus* before he collated the Donatian manuscripts, perhaps hurriedly, in the summer of 1521 when he had access to them; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 198 with n767.

811 Cf the annotation on 2 Pet 1:16 (*virtutem et praescientiam*). But in the annotation on 1 Cor 12:28 (*interpretationes sermonum*) he speaks of the 'Latin codices,' specifically those in the library of St Donatian; the plural here may be a generalization or a careless mistake.

Testament, including those on Acts (but not on Revelation). More than half appear in the annotations on the Epistles.

Of the exegetes, a few authorities are relatively new in the *1522* annotations. Erasmus had published his edition of Cyprian in 1520, and while this African is minimally referenced in *1519*, in the edition of 1522 Cyprian's book of 'Testimonies'[812] serves as a fairly standard authority, especially in the annotations on the Gospels where the 'testimonies' from Scripture became a useful witness to the text. For the first time in *1522* Erasmus was able to add, as we have seen, some quotations from Chrysostom's *Homilies on Acts*. His discovery of the commentaries of the Venerable Bede – 'a writer worthy of respect'[813] – brought a flurry of new references to the Catholic Epistles. Although Erasmus had acknowledged the *Gloss* in *1519*,[814] it became a referential instrument systematically used first in *1522*, and even then primarily for the annotations on Acts.[815]

Among the patristic authors whose work was already well mined in previous editions, Jerome, Augustine, and Chrysostom were once again thumbed to find witnesses to both text and interpretation in Gospels and Epistles. Apart from the annotations on Matthew and Ephesians, on which Jerome had written commentaries, new allusions to Jerome's work are rather thinly scattered across the annotations. The wide reach of references to Augustine in *1519* has been narrowed to about a dozen works in *1522*, but the availability of the *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* in the winter of 1521[816] made it by far the most extensively cited of any of Augustine's works in *1522*, providing a significant amplification of the new edition. In the *1522* annotations on the Gospels Chrysostom finds a place chiefly in Matthew. In the Epistles from Romans to 2 Thessalonians he is given no place in the *1522* additions (a situation dramatically changed in the fourth and fifth editions) but is followed consistently in the annotations from 1 Timothy to Hebrews,

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812 *Ad Quirinum testimoniorum libri tres adversus Iudaeos* (cited as *Testimonia* or *Adversus Iudaeos*)

813 Cf the annotation on 1 Pet 1:2 (*secundum praescientiam*).

814 Cf the annotations on Matt 1:19 (*nollet eam traducere*) ASD VI-5 82:381–3 and Matt 12:31 (*spiritus autem blasphemiae*), where Erasmus refers to the 'Mainz edition' of the *Gloss*.

815 It is, however, in an annotation on Phil 4:9 (*haec cogitate et agite*) that Erasmus, with a sneer at one of his critics (López Zúñiga), tells of his access to the *Gloss* in Anderlecht in the summer of 1521; cf *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae* ASD IX-2 216:866–78.

816 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 194–5 with nn754, 755.

where a Latin translation was available. In the new annotations on the Pauline Epistles Ambrosiaster and Theophylact play a very large role, as in previous editions. Surprisingly Theophylact is absent from the *1522* additions to the annotations on the Gospels. For this there seems to be no ready explanation.

A few other authorities are referenced in the *1522* additions, but seldom. Origen, again perhaps surprisingly, makes a faint showing, Tertullian appears a few times only,[817] as does Eusebius of Caesarea. Didymus the Blind, Hilary, Lactantius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Prudentius, and Claudianus all get a mention only. Of the medieval authorities, Thomas, Hugh, and Lyra seldom appear. Valla, clearly left behind in *1519*, fares little better in *1522*. Thus, in respect to sources, the 1522 edition stands out especially for the profusion of evidence harvested from the freshly found manuscripts and the Aldine Bible, and from recently available patristic texts – Cyprian's book of 'Testimonies,' Augustine's work against Faustus the Manichaean, some scraps of Chrysostom on Acts, Bede on the Catholic Epistles – and the *Gloss*.

## VIII THE *PARAPHRASES* ON THE GOSPELS AND ACTS (1521–4)

### The World of Erasmus 1521–4

Erasmus began to write the *Paraphrase on Matthew*, first of the Gospel *Paraphrases*, in late 1521, probably December; he published his *Paraphrase on Acts*, last of all the *Paraphrases* to be written, in February 1524. From Erasmus' point of view, two major issues dominated the European scene during these years: the war between Charles and Francis I, arising largely from Francis' jealousy of Charles, who had won the bid for the imperial throne; and the conflict between what Erasmus would call the 'new gospel and the old,'

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817 Although Beatus Rhenanus had published an edition of Tertullian in 1521 (the *editio princeps*), Erasmus may not have had sufficient time to use it effectively. Tertullian would appear more frequently in the fourth edition. Erasmus seems, however, to have been well acquainted with some of Tertullian's work by August 1520, when he published the revised version of the *Apologia de 'In principio erat sermo'*; cf CWE 73 22 n31. For an indication of Erasmus' rapidly growing familiarity with Tertullian's work even in 1522 see *Ratio* n121.

which was to say, the divisions resulting from the rise of Luther.[818] It was particularly in relation to the latter that Erasmus claimed in March 1524 that he had attempted to 'steer clear of both camps' and had 'concentrated on subjects which should give no offence to either party,' adding that among other things he had 'completed all the *Paraphrases* on the New Testament except the Apocalypse, which entirely refuses to admit of paraphrase …'[819] But if the composition of the *Paraphrases* on the Gospels was an exercise in religious neutrality, Erasmus was forthright in making these *Paraphrases* serve a major political purpose by dedicating them to the chief political players on the European scene – Charles, Ferdinand, Henry VIII, and Francis I – and by encouraging these leaders in the dedicatory letters to make peace, and so to represent as Christian rulers the peace the Gospels proclaimed. At the same time Erasmus deftly used these *Paraphrases* to place himself favourably with the world's regents on both sides of the conflict.

### *War Impinges Upon Erasmus*

Shortly after Charles' coronation in October 1520, allies of Francis engaged in skirmishes in the Netherlands and the frontier regions of the Pyrenees, and fighting broke out in Italy as well.[820] In March 1521 Charles, then at the Diet of Worms, sent Henry III of Nassau to take command of his army in the Netherlands,[821] and in the autumn of the same year Charles himself laid siege to Tournai.[822] In the summer of 1521 Cardinal Schiner, after his urgent appeal to Erasmus to paraphrase the Gospel of Matthew, left Brussels on his way to Germany, thence to Milan, where, on behalf of Charles, he would lead Swiss troops in the siege of that city. The Swiss were assisted by troops led by Giulio de' Medici (the future Pope Clement VII) and by a Spanish contingent. The city capitulated to the imperial forces on 19 November 1521.[823] Over the next few years, Milan, which the predecessors of Francis had subjected to French rule, would be the prize bitterly contested by Charles and Francis.[824]

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818 Cf Ep 1432:14–22. Although much less the focus of Erasmus' concerns, the growing threat of Turkish invasion was also clearly within the scope of his vision.
819 Ep 1432:23–32
820 Cf Ep 1228 n12.
821 Cf Epp 1192 and 1065 introductions.
822 Cf Ep 1302:30–1 with n10 and 'New Testament Scholarship' 192 with n743.
823 Cf Ep 1250 n5.
824 Cf Ep 1342 n31.

In general, Henry VIII and sometimes the popes aligned themselves with Charles; in fact, in May 1521 Pope Leo deserted Francis for Charles.[825] In the summer of the same year, an alliance was concluded at Bruges between the English and the Hapsburgs by a secret treaty.[826] Erasmus commented, 'Here [at Bruges] we are making great preparations for war against the French. The pope [Leo X] … has joined our side.'[827] Charles left the Netherlands in May 1522.[828] Before returning to Spain, he spent several weeks in England, where he concluded a treaty with Henry VIII committing the two monarchs to a joint invasion of France.[829] In late 1522 and early 1523 Adrian, elected pope in January 1522, endeavoured to mediate a peace between Charles and Francis, but shortly after 23 March the mediation failed because Francis demanded back Milan as the price of an agreement.[830] Subsequently, in the summer Adrian joined Charles, Henry, and Venice in an anti-French league.[831] By September Francis was again facing the prospect of invasion by Charles, Henry, and a Frenchman turned traitor, Charles Bourbon.[832] The threat of invasion continued into the early months of 1524.[833] Adrian's successor, Pope Clement VII, strove once more to make peace but failed.[834]

Erasmus repeatedly expressed regrets, even dismay, at the direful consequences of this war. In September 1521, writing to Budé, he pointed to the councillors who, 'with the skill of classical tyrants,' urge on the emperor and the king so that they can 'establish their own despotic power,' and concludes, 'If only both princes might be on their guard' and not have to say eventually of the consequences of war, 'I had not thought of that.'[835] A month later he expressed himself with more vehemence: 'Two princes … drag the world down to destruction with them; and all this time … where is the authority of the Roman pontiff … is he powerless when it comes to

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825 Cf Ep 1228 n13.
826 On 25 August (Ep 1223 introduction). It was at this time that Erasmus, while at Bruges with Charles' court, was given access to the Donatian manuscripts so heavily used in the preparation of the third edition of the New Testament; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 198 with n767.
827 Ep 1228:58–60
828 Charles left Brussels on 2 May 1522; cf Ep 1269 n6.
829 Cf Ep 1306 n22.
830 Cf Ep 1353 n30.
831 On 3 August 1523; cf CEBR I 7 and nn823, 824 above.
832 Cf Ep 1388 n17.
833 Cf Ep 1430 n2.
834 Cf Ep 1417:6–14 with n5.
835 Ep 1233:18–24

restraining his sons from such a destructive war? ... Someday perhaps our Charles will be heard to say, "I never thought that war was such a poisonous thing."'[836] In May 1522, reaching across the lines of hostility, Erasmus wrote to Nicolas Bérault of Orléans: 'I perceive, and the sight is torment to me, that this war between the Germans and the French gets more and more bitter every day. What a calamity for the whole of Christendom … what have citizens and country folk done to deserve this, who are robbed of their livelihoods, driven from their homes, dragged off into captivity, slaughtered and torn in pieces?'[837] Of Milan he wrote in August of 1524, 'Poor Milan! After all those disasters in the war, to be struck so hard now by the plague.'[838]

But the war impinged upon Erasmus personally, particularly in restricting his movements. Still in Anderlecht in late September 1521, in spite of the fact that his presence was urgently needed in Basel for the printing of his third edition, he confided to Paolo Bombace that he was 'still in two minds whether to go to Basel.' In fact, he claims that he had already set out on the journey, then adds, 'But this cruel war which spreads more widely every day has deterred me.'[839] When he summoned the courage finally to undertake the trip, he was escorted part way by disciplined troops returning to Germany from the Netherlands with their booty![840]

Later, in 1522 and 1523 Erasmus, now in Basel, seemed particularly distressed. He was unable to accept the invitation of Francis to live in France with an assured income – unable not only because of fear from the threatened invasion of France but also because of his obligations of loyalty to Charles, for whom he was a councillor. He described the circumstances to his good friend Marcus Laurinus: a passport from the king himself had been secured to give him greater safety in travelling.[841] France was a country he had come to like in his earlier years. In France he would be closer to Brabant, 'to which it would have been possible to slip across even in wartime, thanks to my acquaintance and private friendships with those who hold the cities near the border on both sides. There was one obstacle: war among the three kings. To one of them, Charles, I am actually bound by oath; with the second, the king

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836 Ep 1238:69–79
837 Ep 1284:41–9
838 Ep 1478:12–13
839 Ep 1236:197–204
840 Cf Ep 1248 n1.
841 Erasmus had received a 'safe conduct' before September 1522 but had hesitated because of the war; cf Ep 1311:26–8.

of England, I have many ties of obligation …the third [Francis] … I cannot fail to be warmly attached to for the generous favour he has shown me.'[842]

*Taking a Stand on Luther*

In the tormented religious debates of the early 1520s, Erasmus was reluctant to take a firm public stand on Luther and seems to have found a sort of refuge in the composition of the *Paraphrases* on the Gospels and Acts, work wherein he found himself above the fray.[843] His position long remained ambiguous, and it was only gradually that he took a decisive stand against Luther. In October 1519, in a letter to Albert of Brandenburg, he had defended Luther because Luther had attacked the sources of the destructive character of much of the Christianity of the day, in particular the burden of prevailing ordinances, the power of the monastic orders, and the excessive use of indulgences – though in making his case Luther 'was rather too intemperate.'[844] He argued that Luther's critique of ecclesiastical conditions was by no means new; others had made the same criticisms and without apparent retaliation. It seemed that the charges against Luther were merely a cover his critics had devised to destroy the humanities by linking the humanities with the cause of Luther.[845] More than a year later, in December 1520, he had explained to Cardinal Campeggi why he thought well of Luther: a man of 'rare natural gifts and a nature finely adapted to expound the mysteries of Scripture in the classical manner and blow the spark of gospel teaching into flame.'[846] Erasmus found that men whom he respected rejoiced 'that they had come upon [Luther's] books' and those who knew him spoke highly of his 'way of life.'[847] But he had found in Luther 'enough to cause me some anxiety and suspicion' and soon 'stumbled upon something rude and harsh …'[848]

Erasmus' support of Luther had never been without equivocation. Among the supporters of Luther, Ulrich von Hutten, in mid-August 1520, scolded Erasmus for his studied ambivalence – after all, Luther's opponents knew perfectly well what Erasmus' real feelings were; Hutten begged Erasmus at least to keep quiet and not to write in a way that 'seems either to

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842 Ep 1342:624–31
843 Cf 213 with n819 above.
844 Cf Ep 1033:131–50, 175–6.
845 Cf Ep 1033:151–68, 224–7.
846 Ep 1167:140–2
847 Ep 1167:145–50
848 Ep 1167:160–73

attack [Hutten's] position or even simply not to accept it.'[849] A few months later, the staunchly Catholic Nicolaas Baechem, appointed in 1520 assistant inquisitor for the Netherlands,[850] demanded that Erasmus declare himself by writing a public refutation of Luther.[851] Luther's excommunication on 3 January 1521 rendered ambiguity even less tolerable, and in the spring of both 1521 and 1522, Erasmus, fearing that his enemies were representing him as Lutheran at the imperial court, sent letters to people in powerful positions in the court to assure the court that he was, and always would remain, a Catholic.[852]

Throughout 1521, 1522, and 1523, Erasmus was forced to respond to requests – some gentle, some urgent – to write against Luther. Requests came from friends – Paolo Bombace, William Blount (Mountjoy), Pierre Barbier, Cuthbert Tunstall[853] – and from men at the summit of power, such as Pope Leo X, King Henry VIII, Duke George of Saxony, Pope Adrian VI.[854] For some time Erasmus excused himself. While in general his rationale varied with his audience, he pleaded that there were some who had attempted to refute Luther, still others who should, that he was a man of letters without the appropriate theological tools to engage Luther, that he was very busy with projects of his own, and that he was not without fear of the consequences.[855] In the summer of 1521, after Charles had proclaimed an imperial ban against Luther,[856] Erasmus' fear of public 'turmoil and bloodshed'[857] led him to

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849 Cf Ep 1135:22–6, 48–51.

850 Cf Ep 1254 n6 and CEBR I 81.

851 Cf Ep 1162:230–1.

852 For the correspondence of spring 1521 see Epp 1195, 1197, 1198; and for Erasmus' recollection, Ep 1342:55–72; for the letters of 1522 see especially Epp 1273, 1274, 1275, and 1276.

853 Cf Epp 1213:42–66 (Bombace), 1219:6–9 (Mountjoy), 1225:259–60 (Barbier), 1367:3–115 (Tunstall), and 1341A:1362–70.

854 Cf Epp 1180:17–24 (Pope Leo), 1385:4–6 and 1415:62–4 with n14 (King Henry), 1298:24–44 (Duke George), 1324:24–89 (Pope Adrian).

855 Cf eg Epp 1143:56–63, 1167:219–54, 1173:40–101, 1217:152–61, 1313:51–73.

856 The ban, known as the 'Edict of Worms,' was proclaimed by Charles on 26 May, the day after the last session of the diet. Charles' proclamation outlawed Luther and forbade the reading or dissemination of his writings; cf Ep 1313 n7. For Erasmus'relation to Luther at this time see also 'New Testament Scholarship' 158 with nn622, 624.

857 Cf Ep 1219:51–2. Erasmus claimed to be 'almost the first' to recognize that the rift between Luther and the Catholic church could lead to warfare; cf Epp 1143:22–3, 1167:410–12 and 439–41, 1225:225–7. For his early 'premonition' of civil strife see Ep 1113:27–8 with n12.

consider an irenic approach: he would write not specifically against Luther but in the interest of peace. Thus he suggested to Blount (Mountjoy) in July 1521 that, after he arrived in Basel and finished his third edition of the New Testament, he might 'attempt something that may help to heal this discord, or at least prove [his] will to do so.'[858] A month later he offered a similar assurance to Barbier.[859]

In spite of his will to conciliate, Erasmus found even while he was still in Anderlecht that many of Luther's supporters no longer desired his friendship and were attacking him as Pelagian.[860] Once Erasmus arrived in Basel in November, he discovered that he was exposed to an even fuller measure of hostility from the followers of Luther. In March 1522 he complained to Stanislaus Thurzo: 'Here Luther's people grind their teeth at me because they say I disagree with him; they tear me to pieces in their public pronouncements and threaten me with venomous pamphlets on top of that.'[861] A month earlier, Erasmus had noted the charge of Pelagianism: 'Luther's party in their public utterance tear me to pieces as a Pelagian, because they think I give more weight to free will than they do to free will.'[862] By April 1522 he had begun to write a 'short treatise on how to end this business with Luther,' evidently a set of three dialogues in which he 'attempted a discussion rather than a confrontation on the question of Martin Luther.'[863] At the end of 1522 he offered to send Pope Adrian a 'proposal … for putting an end to this evil in such a way that it will not easily sprout again,' and at the same time avoiding 'brute force.'[864] In March 1523 he submitted to the pope a plan to 'bring this discord to an end.'[865]

But Lutheran hostility seemed to intensify. German Catholics had been spreading rumours that Erasmus was preparing 'large, ferocious volumes to attack, and indeed utterly to overthrow all the citadels of Luther's supporters.'[866] In May 1522, Luther wrote a letter 'without an addressee and intended for broad circulation' in which he belittled Erasmus' knowledge about the doctrine of predestination and indicated his expectation of an attack

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858 Cf Ep 1219:135–7.
859 Cf Ep 1225:330–4.
860 Cf Ep 1225:302–8.
861 Ep 1267:28–31
862 Ep 1259:13–15 with n5
863 Cf Epp 1275:23–4 with n7 and 1341A:1339–40.
864 Ep 1329:14–16
865 Cf Ep 1352:30.
866 Ep 1278:21–3 (25 April 1522)

by Erasmus.[867] A year later, in June 1523, Luther wrote to Oecolampadius that '[Erasmus] has accomplished what he was called to do: he has introduced among us [the knowledge of] the languages, and has called us away from sacrilegious studies … he does not advance the better studies (those which pertain to piety). I greatly wish he would restrain himself from dealing with Holy Scripture and writing his Paraphrases, for he is not up to the task; he takes up the time of [his] readers, and hinders them in studying Scripture.'[868] About the same time, in Nürnberg rumours were imputing to Erasmus a dialogue in which he had attacked the importance ascribed to faith.[869] Thus by the summer of 1523 relations with Luther and his supporters had clearly deteriorated. Although in writing to Huldrych Zwingli on 31 August Erasmus could say that he either would not write against Luther or, if he wrote, he would not satisfy the 'pharisees,'[870] on 4 September he wrote to Henry VIII that he 'had something on the stocks against the new doctrines' that he 'would not dare to publish' unless he left Germany first.[871] On 21 November 1523 he was ready to announce his subject, a subject virtually determined by Lutheran criticism: '[The *Paraphrase* on] Mark is finished … I have started [the *Paraphrase* on] the Acts of the Apostles … If my strength holds out, I shall add a book on free will.'[872] On 13 February 1524 he wrote a short letter to Pope Clement VII to accompany his now completed *Paraphrase on Acts*, and during the same month sent to Ludwig Baer, professor of theology at Basel, a first draft of the *De libero arbitrio*.[873] Thus the journey away from Luther coincided very closely in time with the writing of the *Paraphrases* on the Gospels and Acts.

**Humanist and Scholar: A Multitude of Publications**

If the *Paraphrases* on the Gospels and Acts were composed in a context of tumultuous civic and ecclesiastical events, they also take their place in a broad field of widely ranging literary efforts that occupied, even over-occupied, Erasmus from late 1521 to 1524. The *Colloquies*, which became immediately

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867 Cf CWE 76 lvii for the *Iudicium D. Martini Lutheri de Erasmo Roterodamo*.
868 CWE 76 lviii, citing WA *Briefwechsel* 3 96–7 n626 / LW 49 43–4 n133; cf Epp 1384:61–3, 1397:10–12.
869 Cf Ep 1374:56–8 with n6.
870 Ie hard-line Catholics; cf Ep 1384:46–52.
871 Ep 1385:15–16
872 Ep 1397:13–16
873 Cf Epp 1418:54–9 and 1419.

controversial, appeared in four editions, published in March 1522, July / August 1522, August 1523, and March 1524, in the course of which more than two dozen new colloquies were added.[874] The *De conscribendis epistolis* (August 1522) was a radical revision of earlier work.[875] In late 1523 Erasmus prepared for John More a commentary on the 'Nut Tree,' a poem attributed to Ovid.[876] Another edition of the *Adagia* had been published at the beginning of 1523.[877]

Work on the Fathers included the publication in 1523 of an edition of Hilary of Poitiers. Erasmus seems to have begun this work fairly early in 1522; it was an edition, he claimed, that 'entailed even greater labour [than his Jerome].'[878] Of lesser importance as a patristic work, he published in the previous September (1522) an edition of the commentary on the Psalms by Arnobius the Younger.[879] About the same time he wrote the preface for the first volume to be published in what would become the series constituting the *Opera* of Augustine.[880] At the end of this period he published his commentary on Prudentius for Margaret More.[881]

Apologetic works also absorbed his time. In March 1522 Sancho Carranza asked Erasmus for clarification on some points in his *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae*, and in the spring and summer of that year López Zúñiga managed to publish two more books against Erasmus, who responded to these and to Carranza in a publication of August 1522 that included his controversial *Epistola apologetica ad Christophorum episcopum Basiliensem de*

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874 Although the *Colloquies* had their origin in 'formulae' for familiar conversation published as early as 1518, the *Colloquies* 'as we know [the book] … really begins with the two editions of 1522' CWE 39 xxvii.

875 Cf CWE 25 2–6 and Ep 1284 introduction.

876 Published in early 1524 for John More, son of Sir Thomas More, along with a commentary on Prudentius for Margaret More daughter of Sir Thomas; cf introductions to Epp 1402 and 1404, both of which were written in December 1523, the same month in which Erasmus wrote the dedication to Francis I for his *Paraphrase on Mark* (Ep 1400; cf Ep 1403).

877 Cf Ep 1330 n6.

878 Cf Epp 1253:31–2 (4 January 1522), 1289:17–19 (4 June 1522); and the preface to the edition, Ep 1334 (5 January 1523), from which the clause is quoted, lines 21–2.

879 Ep 1304 (Erasmus' preface to the edition). Arnobius the Younger lived in the fifth century, the elder Arnobius late fourth, early fifth.

880 Cf Ep 1309. The volume had been edited and prepared with copious notes by Juan Luis Vives.

881 Cf n876 above.

*interdicto esu carnium.*[882] The two letters, 1341A and 1342, virtually little books, to some degree defensive in character, were published together in April 1523. Among his defensive works of this period must be included the *Spongia*, in which Erasmus defended himself against the accusation of Ulrich von Hutten, arising from a deeply personal affair whose sequel in the ensuing quarrel with Heinrich Eppendorf would trouble Erasmus for almost a decade.

Erasmus' biblical work in these years was not limited to the *Paraphrases* and the third edition of the New Testament. In 1522, as we have seen, he published the last of the three separate Latin editions of his New Testament translation, which included the significant *De philosophia evangelica*. The *Ratio* was twice enlarged during this period. Completely new was a *Paraphrase on the Lord's Prayer* (October 1523), written at the request of Justus Ludovicus Decius and intended evidently as a work for devotional exercises.[883] He published a commentary on Psalm 2 (September 1522) and a *Paraphrase* on Psalm 3 (March 1524), written at the request of Melchior Matthaei of Vianden, who wanted him to 'do again for the mystical Psalms what [he] had done for the New Testament.'[884] The distinction between *commentarius* and *paraphrasis* in the title of these two publications on the Psalms sheds light on Erasmus' conception of 'paraphrase.'

Erasmus' publications reflect also his concern for reform in the church and for the devotional life of its members. The *De esu carnium* (April 1522) was apparently an unsolicited letter of advice to the bishop of Basel in the wake of an uproar that had arisen as a result of some citizens eating pork on Passion Sunday (13 April).[885] The *Exomologesis*, published at the very end of our period (March 1524, with the *Paraphrase* on Psalm 3), gave an account

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882 Ie 'A Letter to Christopher Bishop of Basel Concerning the Prohibition on Eating Meat' (abbreviated as *De esu carnium,* translated in CWE 73); cf n885 just below. For the response to Carranza and López Zúñiga see Ep 1277 n8 and ASD IX-2 42.

883 Cf Ep 1393 and 1341A:780–1; for the work as a devotional book see Ep 1393:44–7. It is translated in CWE 69.

884 Cf Ep 1427:3–8.

885 Cf Ep 1341A:1306–13, where Erasmus claims that he wrote the *De esu carnium* without a view to publication; its later publication (August) was evidently requested by the bishop (cf ibidem n323). For the incident on Passion Sunday see Epp 1274 n7, 1293n8, 'New Testament Scholarship' 259 with n1074, and CWE 73 xxiv. We may recall here Erasmus' solicited advice to Pope Adrian on the challenge posed to the church by Luther: a promise made in 1522 became a proposal in 1523; cf Epp 1324 and 1324A (December 1522); also Erasmus' letters to the pope, Epp 1329 and (with the proposal) 1352 (cf 218 with nn864, 865 above).

of Erasmus' views on confession. Two short pieces of devotional literature, later enlarged, were published in 1523. The *Virginis et martyris comparatio*, written for a community of Benedictine nuns in Cologne, was a thank-you note for a 'New Year's gift of sweets.'[886] It was published later in the year as a 'filler' with the 1523 edition of the *Ratio*. The *Liturgia Virginis Matris*, written at the request of Thiébaut Biétry, parish priest of Porrentry (France), appeared in November 1523, 'the shortest of Erasmus' works ever to be printed separately.'[887]

Some of these publications, such as the editions of the Fathers, take their place in what appears to have been a broad design in the mind of Erasmus; others were occasional works arising from events and requests, in this respect similar to the *Paraphrases* on the Gospels, as we shall see. Together they reveal the multifaceted character of Erasmus' Christian humanism and its decisively religious orientation; they attest also the range and intensity of the literary labours in the midst of which he composed the *Paraphrases* on the Gospels. Indeed, he himself more than once during this period spoke of the overwhelming weight of his work.[888]

## The *Paraphrases* on the Gospels and Acts

### *A Temporal Perspective*

The story of the composition and publication of the *Paraphrases* on the Gospels and Acts ostensibly begins with events in the summer of 1521, when Erasmus was living in Anderlecht and attending the court in Brussels and Bruges, a period, we may recall, crucial in the preparation of the third edition of his New Testament. Matthäus Schiner, serving the interest of Charles, had arrived at the court in Brussels in mid-June, where Erasmus met him once more.[889] The cardinal, who the previous autumn had urged Erasmus

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886 Cf CWE 69 154 and Ep 1346 introduction (c February 1523).

887 Cf Ep 1391 introduction and CWE 69 80 where it is said that the castle of Porrentry was the 'favoured residence' of the bishop of Basel.

888 Cf eg Epp 1274:11–16, 1294:13–14 with n9, 1330:20–1 with n6.

889 Erasmus told Thomas More in a letter of 30 May 1517 that he had met Schiner 'yesterday,' when he 'had a long discussion with him about the New Testament' (Ep 584:26–9). In a letter to Johann Reuchlin, dated 8 November 1520 and written from Cologne, Erasmus says that he had 'dined with [Schiner] lately' (Ep 1155:3), presumably when Erasmus was with the court in that city in October / November after Charles' coronation; cf Ep 1171:48–58 with n11. The following

to complete the *Paraphrases* on the apostolic Epistles, now 'urged [Erasmus] to do for Matthew's Gospel what [he] had done for the apostolic Epistles.'[890] Erasmus hesitated, both doubtful of and daunted by the task.[891] In any case, he was fully engaged at this point in preparing the third edition of his New Testament and his response to López Zúñiga. But by the time he had arrived in Basel on 15 November, he had apparently resolved his doubts and began work on the *Paraphrase on Matthew* shortly thereafter.[892] On 14 December he wrote to Schiner that the *Paraphase* was finished.[893] Although the dedicatory letter is dated 13 January 1522, Erasmus claims to have finished the *Paraphrase* in about a month; later, in 1523, he recalled that the composition had taken two months.[894] The *Paraphrase*, dedicated to Charles V, was published in March 1522,[895] 'in a volume of which the second part consisted of [the *Paraphrases* on] the complete Epistles dated February.'[896] Charles had received the *Paraphrase* before 1 April,[897] not long therefore before he left for Spain in May 1522.[898]

In the late summer of 1522 Erasmus heard from Wolfgang Faber Capito that Cardinal Albert of Brandenburg, archbishop of Mainz, had found his 'love towards Christ kindled' by reading the *Paraphrase on Matthew* and added that Erasmus should 'devote the same care to explaining John.'[899] Apparently, about the same time, a similar request came from John Fisher,

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summer, when both were in Brussels, they met again, at which meeting Schiner urged Erasmus to undertake a *Paraphrase* on Matthew's Gospel; cf Ep1255:25–31, where lines 27–30 should read: '… the cardinal of Sion, when he was in Brussels (it was he who had encouraged me to complete the canonical Epistles) … began to urge me …' For possible meetings between Schiner and Erasmus see CWE 44 132 with n1. For Schiner and the *Paraphrases* on the Catholic Epistles see 'New Testament Scholarship' 167 with n663.

890 Cf Ep 1255:30–1.

891 See Ep 1255:32–89 for the difficulties Erasmus imagined he would face in undertaking a *Paraphrase* on Matthew. From this passage much can be inferred about Erasmus' understanding of his work as a paraphrast.

892 For the date of arrival see Ep 1242 introduction.

893 Cf Ep 1248:16–17.

894 Cf Epp 1255:89–92 ('one month'), 1342:272–4 ('two months').

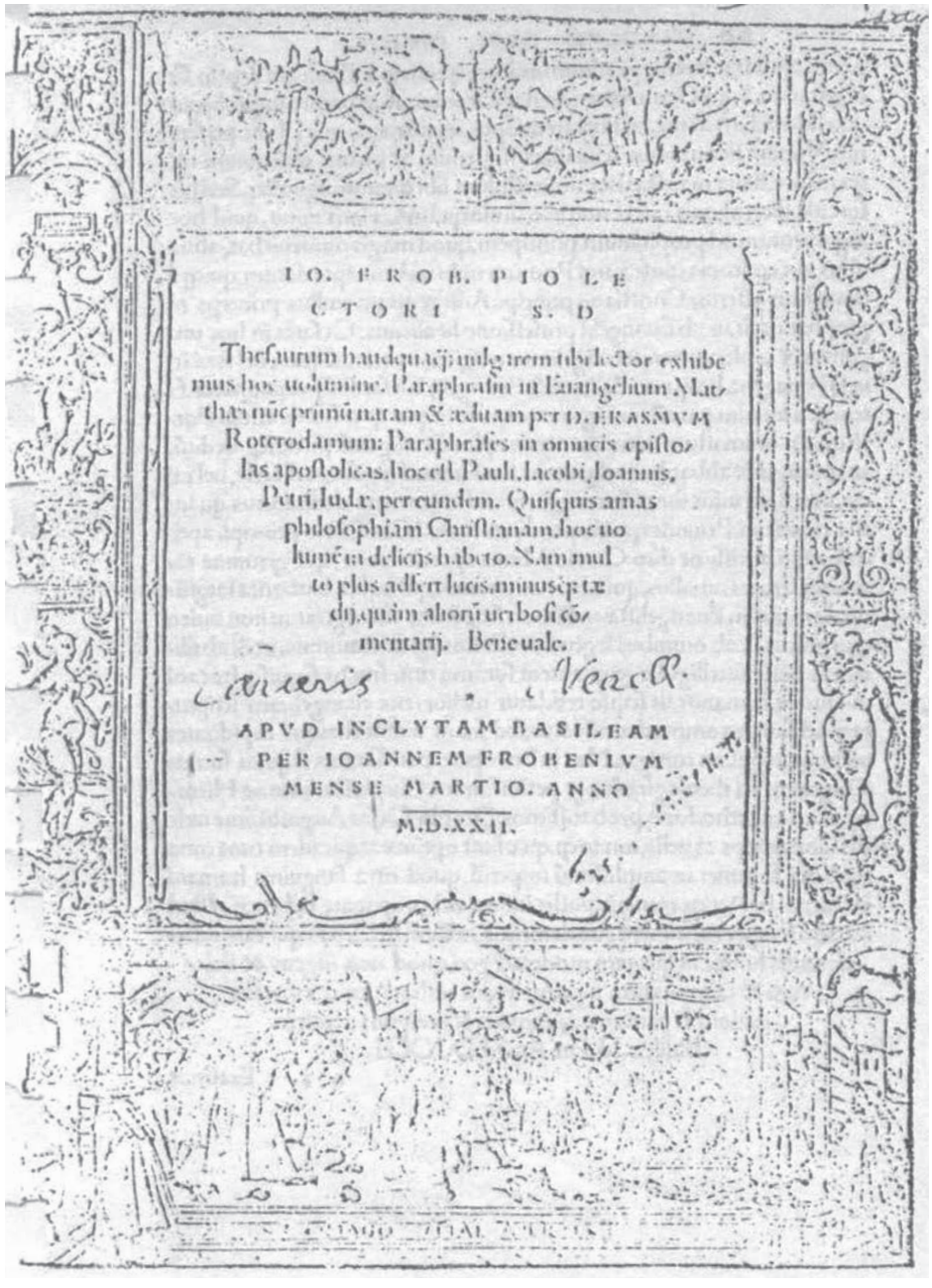
895 Cf Ep 1255 introduction.

896 CWE 42 xxiii

897 Cf Epp 1269 and 1270.

898 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 214 with nn827, 828.

899 Ep 1308:21–4



IO. FROB. PIO LE
CTORI S. D

Thesaurum haudquaq; inuidendum tibi lector exhibemus hoc uolumine. Paraphrasin in Euangelium Matthæi nũc primũ natam & æditam per D. ERASMVM Roterodamum: Paraphrases in omnes epistolas apostolicas, hoc est, Pauli, Iacobi, Ioannis, Petri, Iudæ, per eundem. Quisquis amas philosophiam Christianam, hoc nostro lumẽ in delicijs habeto. Nam multo plus adfert lucis, minusq; taedij, quàm aliorũ uiri boni cõmentarij. Bene uale.

APVD INCLYTAM BASILEAM
PER IOANNEM FROBENIVM
MENSE MARTIO. ANNO
M.D.XXII.

Title page of the *Paraphrase on Matthew* and on the apostolic Epistles, 1522 folio edition

bishop of Rochester.[900] By 29 November Erasmus was able to say that he had the *Paraphrase on John* 'in hand.'[901] From this point our interest in the chronology of the *Paraphase* turns to a sequence of events reflecting the forces of fate and character. Erasmus had, perhaps at an early (but unknown) stage in the preparation of the *Paraphrase*, decided to dedicate it to Ferdinand I, Charles' younger brother who had been appointed in 1521 to rule the Austrian lands.[902] Erasmus' publisher, Froben, wanted to secure an imperial 'privilege' – a limited form of 'copyright' – for all his publications. On 29 November 1522, therefore, Erasmus wrote to Ferdinand announcing his desire to dedicate the *Paraphrase* to the prince, at the same time recommending to Ferdinand's service Jakob Spiegel, who would convey to the young ruler the letter announcing the dedication and requesting the privilege. 'For some reason the letter did not reach Nürnberg [where Ferdinand was presiding at the diet] until the beginning of February 1523.'[903] Before that time, Erasmus had turned to Willibald Pirckheimer of Nürnberg, writing to say that the *Paraphrase on John*, dedicated to Ferdinand, was now 'at press' and asking him to negotiate the privilege 'immediately.'[904] Pirckheimer received the letter just before Ferdinand's departure on 16 February, took immediate action to have the letter of 29 November, of which he had received a copy, presented to Ferdinand, and in the course of a day or two received Ferdinand's signature for the privilege.[905] On 15 February, the day before Ferdinand's departure, Ferdinand wrote a short letter to Erasmus asking him to complete the *Paraphrase* and send him a copy.[906] The *Paraphrase* was published in late February with the privilege clearly declared on the title page.[907] Erasmus

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900 Cf Ep 1311:20–1 with n9 and 1323:22–4. It is apparently a coincidence that the order of composition of the *Paraphrases* on the Gospels follows the canonical order preferred by the Western church: Matthew, John, Luke, and Mark, an order that gives precedence to the apostolic authors, placing in secondary position the disciples of apostles; cf ABD I 855.

901 Ep 1323:22

902 Cf Ep 917 introduction.

903 Ep 1323 introduction

904 Cf Ep 1341:16–29 (28 January 1523).

905 Cf Ep 1344:123–58. For the 'privilege' as a form of copyright see 'Title Pages' 745 with n7.

906 Cf Ep 1343.

907 For the February 1523 date of the folio edition see CWE 42 xxiv. For the title page with the privilege illustrated see CWE 9 230. The privilege also appears on the title page of the first edition of the *Paraphrase on Luke* (also 1523) and of the *Tomus primus* (*Paraphrases* on the Gospels and Acts, 1524).

wanted Ferdinand to be the first to see the new publication and therefore sent him a copy still unbound. It was not until 25 April that the copy reached Ferdinand, who 'received it most graciously' and gave it to Pius Hieronymus Baldung as a present.[908] Later, Erasmus had the *Paraphrases* on both John and Matthew gilded and delivered to Ferdinand through Bernhard von Cles, a trusted adviser of the prince.[909] Ferdinand rewarded Erasmus with 'a present of a hundred gold florins.'[910]

Erasmus suggests, somewhat ambiguously, that the *Paraphrase on Luke*, like those on Matthew and John, was undertaken at the request of others: after the *Paraphrase on John* was completed, 'there began to be a demand for Luke.'[911] Luke offered much material outside the narratives of Matthew and John, and thus avoided a problem that had worried Erasmus when Schiner requested the *Paraphrase on Matthew*.[912] Erasmus appears to have undertaken the *Paraphrase on Luke* several weeks after the publication of the *Paraphrase on John* and worked intensively on it. He had begun work on it by 23 April 1523, and in spite of its extent, 'on 22 June it was already being printed.'[913] The dedication to Henry VIII is dated 23 August, just a week before the work was published.[914]

Erasmus was evidently spurred on by a friend to compose the *Paraphrase on Mark*, 'that a gap in the middle of the work [that is, the paraphrased Gospels] might not tempt someone to interrupt its uniformity by adding something of his own.'[915] The plan to paraphrase Mark was already firmly in mind by mid-August 1523, when Erasmus wrote the dedicatory letter for Luke to King Henry.[916] It was completed by 21 November, apparently com-

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908 Cf Ep 1361:10–23, where the writer, Thomas Lupset, speaks slightingly of the character of the messenger to whom Erasmus had entrusted the unbound copy; cf 1376:13–15.

909 Cf CEBR I 313–4 and Ep 1357.

910 For the books gilded and for the reward from Ferdinand see Ep 1376:15–17.

911 Ep 1341A:764–6

912 Erasmus had observed that if he were to undertake to write *Paraphrases* on all the Gospels, the *Paraphrase* would lose its freshness wherever the gospel narratives coincided; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 223 with n891.

913 Cf Ep 1381 introduction. The *Paraphrase on Luke* is longer than any other *Paraphrase* on the New Testament books and is one of the longest in proportion to the biblical text, a distinction it shares with the *Paraphrase on James*; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' nn707 and 1035). For the date see Ep 1381 introduction.

914 Cf Ep 1381 introduction.

915 Ep 1341A:767–9

916 Cf Ep 1381:437–8.

posed during the autumn when Erasmus was busy with other compositions as well.[917] The sequence of dates that mark the publication of this work invite a fascinating story told well by Sir Roger Mynors.[918] The dedicatory letter to Francis I is dated 1 December 1523; the cover letter for the copy to be presented to the king is dated 17 December. By this time Froben had decided to publish all the *Paraphrases* in a two-volume folio set. The second volume, the *Tomus secundus* (on the apostolic Epistles) was ready[919] but not the first volume, the *Tomus primus* (on the Gospels and Acts), which would not be ready until well into the new year of 1524, when the *Paraphrase on Acts* could be added. Erasmus, however, was anxious to present a copy of his *Paraphrase on Mark* to Francis and evidently persuaded Froben to pull a complete set of sheets of the *Paraphrase* along with a title page, dated 1523, and to bind the sheets for immediate delivery to Francis with the presentation letter of 17 December. Thus, as the *Paraphrase on Mark* was included in the *Tomus primus* published in the spring of 1524, it has the distinction of a double publication date, both 1523 and 1524. In spite of Erasmus' sense of urgency, Francis seems not to have received the gift for some time.[920]

Given Froben's plan, well in place by late 1523, to publish the *Paraphrases* on the Gospels and Acts in a folio volume, Erasmus needed no further admonition to proceed to the *Paraphrase on Acts*; it was, as he noted, a natural and appropriate step to take, since Acts 'was part of St Luke's Gospel.'[921] He appears to have started the *Paraphrase* immediately after completing that on Mark in late November 1523.[922] He became very ill during the Christmas holidays, and on 8 January 1524 he was 'still in such a low state' that he feared he could not finish his *Paraphrase on Acts*.[923] In fact, the *Paraphrase* appears to have been finished in a race against time. On 31 January, in the dedicatory letter to Pope Clement VII Erasmus observed that 'at one and the same moment' he 'was writing this *Paraphrase* on the book called Acts of the Apostles

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917 See Ep 1397:13–15 for the books listed with this *Paraphrase* as work in which Erasmus was engaged in the autumn of 1523.

918 Cf CWE 42 xxv–xxvi.

919 It bears the publication date of 1523.

920 If the 'letter' to which reference is made in Ep 1439:12–14 (cf n4) is the presentation letter, Budé, to whom it was evidently entrusted, writing on 11 April, says he had 'recently' delivered it to the king.

921 Ep 1341A:771

922 Cf Ep 1397:13–15.

923 Cf Ep 1408:2–6.

and the printers were striking it off.'[924] The printing was still unfinished on 8 February, and Erasmus took steps in advance to send to Clement the dedicatory letter through Ennio Filonardi, papal nuncio in Switzerland.[925] Within two weeks he was able to send the pope an unbound copy with a cover letter, again through Filonardi.[926] Well before 15 April, the *Paraphrase* was delivered to the pope, who gave immediate orders to have it bound; the pope acknowledged the gift in a letter dated 30 April.[927] By this time, as we have seen, the *Paraphrases* on all the Gospels and Acts had been bound and published together in the folio edition of *Tomus primus*.[928]

### *The Dedicatory Epistles: Politics and Piety*

In retrospect, the dedication of the *Paraphrases* on the Gospels, each to one of Europe's great rulers, followed by the dedication of the *Paraphrase on Acts* to the pope, supreme spiritual authority over even kings, seems to belong to a well-planned design, a fitting sequel to the dedication of the *Paraphrases* on the apostolic Epistles first to regional prince-bishops, then to international diplomats. Indeed, Erasmus himself suggests that the dedication of the Gospel *Paraphrases* to the kings was symbolic, reflecting the prayer that the warring kings, each with his own Gospel paraphrased, would become united in the one volume of the Gospels.[929] The letters do, in fact, summon the monarchs to kingly piety – and with increasing boldness – but Erasmus' own situation in the context of complex political circumstances seems in each case to have been the immediate factor in his choice of dedicatee.

#### 1/ TO CHARLES V, THE *PARAPHRASE ON MATTHEW* (EP 1255, 13 JANUARY 1522)

The dedicatory letter to Charles is characterized by a certain degree of caution. Erasmus begins by speaking of his reluctance in undertaking the *Paraphrase*, a reluctance due not only to the literary difficulties beyond his skill to resolve but also to the majesty of a narrative too sacred to be touched. He had finally acquiesced in the urgent request of Cardinal Schiner, a man

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924 Ep 1414:3–5
925 Cf Ep 1416:37–8 and 55–7.
926 The cover letter (Ep1418) is dated 13 February 1524; the letter to Filonardi (Ep 1423) with the *Paraphrase* for the pope, 21 February 1524.
927 For the pope's orders see Ep1442:4–6; for the acknowledgment, Ep 1443B.
928 Cf immediately above; for octavo editions see CWE 42 xxv–xxvi.
929 Cf Ep 1400:19–23; but cf Ep 1381:431–5 where Erasmus disavows any design in dedicating the Gospel *Paraphrases* each to a different ruler.

'whose wisdom [the imperial] majesty is often happy to follow in matters of the greatest moment.'[930] There is a further concern: is the *Paraphrase* an appropriate gift for a prince who is not a cleric but a layman? Erasmus appeals to the 'philosophy of Christ' as it was expressed in the *Ratio*: the prince must be the champion of religion, 'a standard or a stimulus to zeal for true religion.'[931] It is only in the concluding paragraph that Erasmus raises, ever so cautiously, the subject of Charles' war with Francis, hinting that it was ultimately unjust.

Erasmus had reason to be cautious. He suspected that he had enemies at the imperial court. In fact, on 19 January 1522 Juan Luis Vives wrote to him from Louvain confirming his suspicions, adding, 'I wish you would write to your friends at court and tell them of the baseless charges being levelled against you by these men whose enmity is criminal … [Write] to the emperor's confessor … for he carries no less weight at court than Christ himself.'[932] Thus the dedication would assure Charles of Erasmus' Catholic integrity; its caution would avoid offence, while its recognition of Charles as a prince at the acme of power in the Christian world and, though a layman, nevertheless as the foundation of Christian piety, was designed to please.[933]

**2/** TO FERDINAND, THE *PARAPHRASE ON JOHN* (EP 1333, 5 JANUARY 1523)

In the early summer of 1518, Ferdinand, the younger brother of Charles, who was born and reared in Spain, arrived in the Netherlands.[934] By autumn of the same year there was discussion about the role he would play in ruling the empire.[935] Meanwhile, the continuing education of the young prince was a matter of concern; Erasmus was invited to be tutor to Ferdinand but declined.[936] In 1521 Ferdinand was assigned his imperial role as ruler of the Austrian lands.[937] In May 1522 Charles, emperor since his coronation in 1520, left the Netherlands for his kingdom in Spain, and Erasmus, now in Basel under Ferdinand's jurisdiction, looked to Ferdinand for protection and favours;

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930 Ep 1255:84–6
931 Ep 1255:105–6
932 Ep 1256:68–72
933 Charles evidently received the gift with great pleasure and responded with generous assurances of support for Erasmus; cf Epp 1270, 1341A:759–60, 1342:272–81.
934 Cf Ep 917 introduction. Ferdinand arrived in the Netherlands between 24 May and 19 June 1518.
935 Cf Ep 893:40–1.
936 Cf Ep 917:22–48 and introduction; also 'New Testament Scholarship' 192 with n745.
937 Cf Ep 917 introduction.

Portrait of Charles v, dedicatee of the *Paraphrase on Matthew*,
by Bernard van Orly
Musée de Louvre, Paris, Cliché des Musées Nationaux

Portrait of Ferdinand, dedicatee of the *Paraphrase on John*, by Hans Maler
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

hence the 'privilege' sought and granted for Froben.[938] The dedication of a *Paraphrase* to the young prince to match the one to Charles was appropriate.

In contrast to the caution exercised in the dedication to Charles, in the letter to Ferdinand Erasmus speaks with boldness and freedom, as he himself observes.[939] While the letter is framed by what is clearly intended as an introduction to the *Paraphrase*, the large central section[940] is a bold admonition to the prince to rule in accordance with the principles of the gospel, an application of the 'philosophy of Christ' in the context of political power, an exposition of the 'duty of a Christian prince,' reflecting once again the intent implied in the image of the circle described in the *Ratio*: 'It may be that a secular prince … cannot always achieve the results which he clearly perceives to be most just, but if he has once drunk deep of the gospel philosophy … so far as he can he will always strive for what is nearest to the commands of Christ and will be deflected as little as possible from his aim.'[941]

While the dedication offered an avenue to secure a 'privilege' for Froben, it was the natural culmination of Erasmus' previous relations with Ferdinand. Following Ferdinand's arrival in the Netherlands in the spring of 1518, Erasmus added a paragraph to the preface of the second edition of the *Institutio principis christiani* – a work in its first edition dedicated to Charles – suggesting that the second edition was really intended for Ferdinand.[942] When, in the spring of 1519, Ferdinand's education became a matter of personal concern for Erasmus, he spoke of the prince's 'good disposition' and noted the importance of 'moulding him according to a Christian philosophy … filling a heart that is still unspoilt … with principles worthy of a true prince.'[943] In the same spring, though he refused to tutor the prince, he nevertheless expressed the desire to 'do something for him with my pen.'[944] That desire seems now to have been fulfilled: in place of an *Institutio*, he wrote an admonition for a prince to implement the philosophy of Christ. Thus the dedication of the *Paraphrase*, while politically astute, appears also to have

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938 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 225 with n905 just above.
939 Cf Ep 1333:295–7.
940 Ie Ep 1333:121–368
941 Ep 1333:199–205. Compare Erasmus' formulation in the *Ratio* of the role of the Christian secular leader, 533 with nn227, 228; compare also Erasmus' advice to his bishop, Philip, in the dedicatory letter to the *Paraphrases* on the pastoral Epistles, 'New Testament Scholarship' 162 with n647.
942 Cf Ep 853:67–71 and introduction.
943 Ep 917:9–13
944 Ep 970:33

been the expression of a cherished obligation towards the construction of piety in a young ruler.

**3/** TO HENRY VIII, THE *PARAPHRASE ON LUKE* (EP 1381, 23 AUGUST 1523)

Erasmus had at least two very good reasons to dedicate his *Paraphrase on Luke* to Henry VIII. First, Erasmus had come under suspicion in England as a supporter of Luther, a suspicion encouraged not only by his failure to write against Luther but also by rumours that he had contributed to Luther's reply (1522) to Henry's attack (1521) on the excommunicated German.[945] Apparently in April 1523, about the time he was beginning his *Paraphrase on Luke*, Erasmus wrote to Tunstall, then bishop of London, to clear himself of the charges.[946] Henry himself had 'urged [Erasmus] hard' to write against Luther;[947] hence in the cover letter that accompanied the presentation copy of the *Paraphrase* Erasmus was careful to note that he had 'something on the stocks against the new doctrines.'[948] Until that was published, he might hope to secure the good will of the king by offering him the *Paraphrase*. Second, as the dedicatory letter suggests, Erasmus was deeply concerned about the political developments in the spring of 1523, when Henry and Charles had joined with Venice to form an anti-French league, a sequel to the treaty signed by Charles and Henry in 1522 'committing them to a joint assault upon France.'[949] Erasmus was prepared to make a bold appeal to Henry to refrain from moving further towards war.

Luke was known as both a historian and a physician; he represented, therefore, disciplines extolled by the humanists of the Renaissance.[950] By dedicating the *Paraphrase on Luke* to Henry Erasmus symbolically attested his esteem for Henry as a humanist. In his reference to Henry's book against Luther,

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945 Henry wrote the *Assertio septem sacramentorum adversus Martinum Lutherum* (1521); Luther replied with *Contra Henricum regem Angliae*, published first in German, then in Latin (1522). Cf Ep 1227 n3 (Henry's *Assertio*) and Ep 1308 n3 (Luther's *Contra Henricum*).

946 Cf Ep 1367:3–6 with nn1 and 4.

947 Cf Ep 1408:25–7.

948 Ep 1385:15–16

949 Cf Ep 1306 n22; also 'New Testament Scholarship' 214 with n829.

950 For the humanist appreciation of history see 'New Testament Scholarship' 59–63, Ep 586 (prefatory letter to an edition of Suetonius, 1517), and Ep 2435 (prefatory letter to an edition of Livy, 1531); for medicine see Ep 1698 (prefatory letter to a translation of three treatises of Galen, 1526 [CWE 29]). Thomas Linacre and Guillaume Cop, both physicians, were esteemed by Erasmus as humanists.

Portrait of Francis I, dedicatee of the *Paraphrase on Mark*, by Titian
Musée Condée, Chantilly

Portrait of Henry VIII, dedicatee of the *Paraphrase on Luke*
National Portrait Gallery, London

Erasmus also deftly acknowledges him as a theologian.[951] It is, however, the exploration of the medical image that Erasmus especially pursues, working out the metaphor in comparison with the steps in a truly Christian conversion. Once again, the themes central to Erasmian humanism as expressed in the *Paraclesis* and the *Ratio* are reflected in the articulation of thought in this dedicatory letter. As in the *Ratio*, so here the passions are the diseases of the soul that prevent true piety. From these everyone, but kings especially, must be cleansed in baptism by the virtue of faith, and their place taken by the virtues that accompany charity. Faith and charity live through the power of the divine word, a word found in Scripture but above all in the Gospels, a point so emphatically made in the *Paraclesis*. As the word gives living force to individuals, it likewise has a force unequalled by any military might for conquering the nations and bringing peace to the world. We recognize this as the central message of Erasmus' Christian humanism – in this letter the message of a humanist to a king recognized as a humanist.

**4/** TO FRANCIS I, THE *PARAPHRASE ON MARK* (EP 1400, 1 DECEMBER 1523)

In February 1523 Erasmus recalled for Marcus Laurinus the invitations to France he had received from the king, first in 1517, then again in the autumn of 1522, and to this would be added another in July 1523. But the war among the monarchs placed Erasmus not only in a conflict of loyalties but also in potential danger in any move he might make from Basel.[952] Thus, in spite of the invitation of July 1523 from Francis himself, Erasmus remained in Basel.[953] He was, however, grateful, and was able to express his gratitude to Francis by dedicating to him the last of the Gospels to be paraphrased. At the same time, it was sent not only as an expression of gratitude but also as a request for peace among the monarchs. In the cover letter for the presentation copy he noted that it came with 'fervent prayers … that as the four Gospels in one volume now unite your names, so we may soon see the gospel spirit unite your hearts together in enduring concord.'[954]

In the dedicatory letter the imaginative imagery of the *Ratio* recurs, particularly as Erasmus observes that against the counsels of evil men 'the

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951 Cf Ep 1381:39–43. This dedicatory letter may be compared with Ep 964 written to Henry in 1519, in which Henry is praised as peacemaker and humanist; cf Ep 964:91–158.

952 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 215 with n841.

953 Cf Ep 1375 (letter of invitation).

954 Ep 1403:14–17. Erasmus made a very similar comment in the dedicatory letter, Ep 1400:21–3. The comment anticipates the publication of *Tomus primus*.

minds of Christian princes must be fortified by the decrees of Christ,' and that 'the target at which all their policy must aim' is the ideal of the gospel.[955] But the letter is perhaps more remarkable for the boldness with which it condemns war, in this respect contrasting with the timidity of the dedicatory letter to Charles. Indeed, at one point a reader might infer a condemnation of Francis for his insistence on the return of Milan as the price of a peace treaty earlier in the year.[956] However, the image of the two swords, an image suggestive of Luke 22:36–8, shifts the responsibility away from Francis. Erasmus here interprets the two swords as the spiritual and secular powers – the sword of the gospel wielded by the clergy, and especially by the prelates, and the sword of public discipline and defence for which the king is responsible.[957] With this distinction Erasmus lays the responsibility for the war on the rulers of the church who serve as councillors to the king and push the king towards war for their own advantage. In the cover letter that soon followed, accompanying the presentation copy, Erasmus not only exonerates Francis but points cautiously to Charles as culpable: 'I know that it is not your fault if that peace is not established which all good men long for; but there is good hope that in the future God will turn the emperor's heart to more moderate designs.'[958]

**5/** TO POPE CLEMENT VII, THE *PARAPHRASE ON ACTS* (EP 1414, 31 JANUARY 1424)
Erasmus had intended to dedicate his *Paraphrase on Acts* to Cardinal Wolsey in England,[959] but on 19 November 1523, following the death of Adrian VI on 14 September 1523, Clement VII was elected pope. Erasmus had reason to believe that the new pope had friendly feelings towards him; in fact, he claimed that Clement had invited him to Rome.[960] Erasmus would not go to

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955 Cf Ep 1400:305–8 and *Ratio* 533, 537.
956 For the failure of a peace treaty in 1523 see 'New Testament Scholarship' 214 with n830. For the inference see Ep 1400:75–8, but note lines 78–80 from which one might equally infer a compensatory thrust at Charles' ambitions for the expansion of his empire.
957 Cf Ep 1400:92–141; but see the annotation on Luke 22:36 (*sed nunc qui habet sacculum*), where Erasmus interprets the sword of Luke 22:36 as the 'sword of the divine word' ASD VII-5 594:964–8, while in the paraphrase on 22:38 the two swords are understood as the Old and the New Testaments, CWE 48 196–7.
958 Ep 1403:19–21
959 Cf Epp 1415:98–102 and 1414:71–7.
960 Cf Ep 1408:11.

Portrait of Clement VII, dedicatee of the *Paraphrase on Acts*, by Sebastiano del Piombo
Museo e Gallerie Nazionali di Capodimonte, Naples

Rome since he feared his enemies there, perhaps López Zúñiga above all, but he could show gratitude to the new pope and further secure his support by dedicating the *Paraphrase on Acts* to him.[961] There was, moreover, an undeniable propriety in the dedication of this *Paraphrase* to the pope: as Erasmus had hinted in the dedication of his New Testament to Leo, the pope was in a position to 'restore a fallen faith,' while in the annotation on Acts 1:1 (*primum quidem sermonem*) he had found in Acts a portrait of the origins of the church from which we 'might better understand how to restore a religion fallen into decay.'[962]

The message of the dedicatory letter, however, returns to the medical imagery elaborated in the dedication of Luke to Henry VIII, imagery evoked by the very name of Clement's family, the Medici. The letter becomes an appeal to Clement to heal the bitter enmity between the monarchs. In the background lay not only the recent papal attempt at mediation between Charles and Francis but also the shifting support of the popes for the kings.[963] Erasmus calls upon Clement to be once more the leader that can still the tempest and 'sooth the raging hearts.' Remarkably, Erasmus turns not to Scripture but to Virgil to illustrate his point, quoting nearly a dozen lines that portray the grave elder who calms the raging crowd.[964] The reference was intended, no doubt, to recognize the humanist background of the new pope, a Medici raised in the house of the great Lorenzo.

## The *Paraphrases* on the Gospels and Acts: A Selective Reading

### *Matthew*

In Matthew's Gospel the Sermon on the Mount, so decisively placed, provided Erasmus with a controlling perspective for his *Paraphrase*: Christ the

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961 For Erasmus' fear of his enemies see Ep 1408:15–20; for the motives of the dedication, Ep 1415:102–5.

962 Cf the annotation on Acts 1:1 (*primum quidem sermonem*) ASD VI-6 178:35–8. In the dedication of the New Testament to Leo Erasmus had spoken of 'collapse' and the 'restoration of the Christian religion,' Ep 384:27, 44–5. In the dedicatory letter to Clement he recalled the hope that in Adrian the world might have a pope who would 'restore the ruined state of things,' and he now expressed the hope that in Clement 'the church in ruins will be reborn,' Ep 1414:11–12, 80.

963 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 214 with nn825, 834.

964 Cf Ep 1414:51–69, especially 64, quoting Virgil *Aeneid* 1.148–56.

master teacher.[965] Around this image Erasmus was able to give form to the first-century setting of the Gospel, inviting the reader to see the disciples as pupils in the gospel school, pupils who were, to be sure, remarkably dull but who in the course of instruction by their teacher would become trained to be the teachers of the future, and to see the scribes and Pharisees as teachers whose diseased souls invalidated both their credentials and their instruction. At the same time, the image of Christ as teacher could easily cast an incisively critical light upon the universities of sixteenth-century Europe.

The paraphrases on Matthew 3 and 4 illuminate the background from which the divine teacher emerges and takes an unlikely podium to begin his instruction in Matthew 5. Over the protests of John the Baptist, Jesus in the paraphrase insists on his baptism so that 'not even the appearance of unrighteousness' should cling to the character of him 'who teaches all and teaches what is perfect.'[966] In the presence of witnesses, authority is conferred by the heavenly Father, a conferral demonstrated by the divine voice and the heavenly dove resting upon Jesus' head, and so the inauguration of the new teacher is concluded: 'With these ceremonies the Lord Jesus was designated and consecrated "Our Teacher"…'[967] The designation is an unmistakable reference to the *magistri nostri*, the title given to the professors of theology in Europe's universities. There follows the temptation, willingly accepted, so that Christ the 'master teacher' might enter the *palaestra*[968] and by his own experience be able to teach his 'athletes' how to overcome the devil. After the temptation he is ready to gather his disciples – his pupils – not the already cultured of this world, but poor uneducated fishermen. Such were 'the beginnings of our philosophy … the pomp and ceremony of the gospel school.'[969] The evocative language here brands upon Christ so clearly the figure of the ideal teacher that the image will remain in sight throughout the *Paraphrase*.

At the beginning of the paraphrase on the Sermon on the Mount Jesus assumes 'the role of the teacher of heavenly philosophy,' who 'began to draw

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965 In the 1522 edition of the New Testament, the Sermon on the Mount constitutes approximately 10 per cent of the text of Matthew; in the 1524 folio edition of the *Paraphrase* it constitutes approximately 20 per cent of the text of the paraphrased Gospel.

966 CWE 45 69

967 Cf CWE 45 70–1 with n65.

968 'Master teacher': *optimus magister* as in CWE 45 72 'the very best of teachers.' For the image of the *palaestra* as a 'training field' in scholastic education see *Ratio* 698.

969 CWE 45 81

out the as yet unheard-of doctrines of the gospel teaching.'[970] That teaching will both recall and contrast with that of the 'self-professed teachers of wisdom.'[971] The paraphrastic sermon recalls the classical philosophers in the assertion of happiness as the goal of wisdom, in its strange 'paradoxes,' in its appeal to natural law and to the *communis sensus* 'the common sense' implanted by nature in every person, in its advocacy of the obligation to follow reason over passion in the achievement of moral goodness. But the master teacher goes beyond the theorizing of the ancient philosophers in his recognition of the periods of time in salvation-history: primitive mankind governed by natural law only; then the Hebrew people given the restraining law from heaven; and finally the new people with the new law of love in the time of grace, a law that is both perfectly consistent with natural law and perfects the law of Moses. The teacher points to the secret that enables the fulfilment of this law of grace: the words of the teacher must 'sink into [the] innermost affections.'[972]

In the *Paraphrase* the master teacher is keenly aware that he is a teacher of future teachers, and he provides them with pedagogical advice. Three principles are noteworthy. First the lives of teachers must be characterized by the wonderful 'vigour' of the gospel, for 'gospel wisdom' is a 'lively and effective thing that can make savoury the lives of the entire human race.'[973] Second, gospel teachers must aim not 'to acquire fame and reputation among men'[974] but to glorify God and 'to perform diligently and in good faith the service committed to them.'[975] Finally, the good teacher will adapt his instruction to the needs of the learners: there are stages in learning, and some instruction is appropriate only to the advanced.[976]

There are several other nodal points in the *Paraphrase* at which the 'teacher' theme acquires an interesting prominence. In the paraphrases on Matthew 10:1–11:1 and 25–30, Jesus sends the twelve disciples out on a mission in which they are to imitate the methods of instruction of their teacher. When they

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970 CWE 45 83
971 CWE 45 84
972 CWE 45 138
973 CWE 45 92. See *Ratio* 532 with n219 for 'spiritual vigour' as a mark of early Christianity. 'Make savoury': cf Matt 5:13 'you are the salt of the earth.'
974 CWE 45 94; a rather conspicuous allusion to the professors of the universities, whose scholastic methods, Erasmus frequently complained, were designed to satisfy their thirst for fame and reputation.
975 CWE 45 95
976 CWE 45 130–1

return with their mission successfully accomplished, Jesus offers a prayer of thanksgiving for the effectual wisdom of his uneducated pupils turned teachers.[977] With an evident glance of reprobation at the university professors of Europe, the paraphrastic Jesus gives thanks because God 'has concealed this heavenly philosophy from those who are swollen with pride and haughty in the conviction that they possess worldly wisdom and prudence.'[978]

In the paraphrase on Matthew 13, a chapter of parables, Erasmus takes the obvious opportunity to accent pedagogical theory. In successful learning both teachers and pupils have a part to play. If teachers of the heavenly philosophy must be sensitive to the capacity of their students' minds, students must 'fix [the gospel message] in their thoughts' and 'transfer it into the affections of their hearts.'[979] The paraphrase on these parables concludes with a fresh and striking characterization of the gospel teacher, whose heart 'must be a sort of vault and treasury, rich and opulent, from which he may easily draw forth various things, now from the books of the Old Testament, now from the gospel philosophy, according to the need of his audience.'[980] The best teachers possess a liberally cultivated mind!

In the later chapters of the Gospel, where Jesus is frequently represented in conflict with the chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees, the *Paraphrase* tends to represent the conflict as one between two kinds of teachers: the master teacher and his opponents, who are 'professed teachers,' 'blind teachers,' vaunting themselves as teachers of the people.[981] In the final chapter, the paraphrase represents the divine teacher outlining the syllabus and course his pupils, now matured fully into teachers, will follow as they go forth to instruct the world in the heavenly philosophy.

### *John*

In the *Paraphrase on John* Jesus continues to be identified as teacher, but his role as such does not constitute the skeletal structure upon which the *Paraphrase* develops. In this *Paraphrase* Jesus the teacher emerges unobtrusively from the gospel narrative as the ideal humanist pedagogue: gentle, a model of courtesy,

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977 For the paraphrase here Erasmus borrows the time frame from Luke 10, where the prayer is offered on the return of the seventy, not the return of the twelve.
978 CWE 45 189
979 Cf CWE 45 212.
980 CWE 45 218
981 Cf CWE 45 317, 318, 320.

with full understanding of the process most effective for leading his pupils to a gradual knowledge of the mystery of faith.[982]

In a postscript 'To the Pious Reader' that appeared first in some Basel editions of 1524, and again in Froben's octavo edition of 1534,[983] Erasmus himself outlines the dominant themes that give structure to this Gospel: faith and trust, love and obedience – the two theological virtues of faith and charity, and their concomitants. These are 'as it were, the centre-point of this Gospel, around which John steadily turns, never retreating from it.'[984] His *Paraphrase* represents his view of the Gospel.

The dominance of the theme of faith in the *Paraphrase* may well arouse the reader's expectation of a full theological exploration of the nature of faith. Some important ideas are indeed exposed, but perhaps the most ubiquitous affirmation is simply that salvation is by faith, an affirmation that is, however, made in multiple ways. *Per solam fidem* 'by faith alone' we become children of God; nothing is required for one to be reborn spiritually 'except a sincere faith';[985] humankind is 'saved through faith,' and eternal life is bestowed 'through faith';[986] *fides sola* 'faith alone' purifies hearts;[987] sins are 'pardoned through faith';[988] Christ came 'to save the world cleansed through faith';[989] there is no way open to the light except through the 'gospel faith';[990] *sola credulitas* 'belief alone' is the 'road and entryway to immortality.'[991] And yet these strong assertions of the virtue of 'faith alone' are sometimes qualified. The first expression of 'faith alone' appears in a qualifying context: we are 'implanted in Christ by faith and baptism'; we become children of God 'through faith and grace.'[992]

In the *Paraphrase* Erasmus elaborates significantly, either directly or by implication, his understanding of the origin of faith. On the one hand, faith is engendered by rational conjecture. God acknowledged the intellectual

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982 Cf eg CWE 46 45, 54, 80, 94–5, 167.
983 Cf CWE 46 226 n1.
984 CWE 46 226
985 CWE 46 22
986 CWE 46 83
987 CWE 46 57
988 CWE 46 155
989 CWE 46 158
990 CWE 46 129
991 CWE 46 118
992 CWE 46 22; cf ibidem 161 'baptism and the declaration of gospel faith provides [purity] for everyone.'

requisites of faith by providing the events of saving-history as a background for the coming of the Messiah, and more directly sent John as a 'witness.'[993] Nathanael's faith, though still incomplete, was inspired by 'clues.'[994] Indeed one of the functions of Jesus' miracles was to 'provide proof of his divine power … in order to win through the evidence of the body's senses credence for his teaching,' and Peter came to faith 'not only relying on [Christ's] words' but on his deeds.[995] At the same time, the *Paraphrase* denigrates reason as the way to faith: Jesus asks Nicodemus to leave his reason behind, saying that 'the things that belong to heavenly teaching are imperceptible to human reason but are grasped by faith …'[996]

The paraphrase on John 6 delicately balances the ambiguities that become apparent when we attempt to define the origin of faith. Here the paraphrase asserts categorically that faith is a gift: 'Faith does not happen by chance but by the inspiration of the Father.' To receive faith, one must desire it, but 'even to desire it is also the gift of the Father.'[997] The fact that faith is a gift does not exculpate anyone from unbelief. If anyone is not drawn to belief, he 'is himself at fault … the gift is God's, but the effort is yours.'[998] Certainly human responsibility for faith is implied in the contrasting attitudes vividly drawn in some of the portraits of the personae in the Gospel. In the paraphrase on John 5, the 'slanderous Jews' reject the 'many pieces of evidence' offered to them as a conjectural base for belief because of their 'debased lusts' and their 'lack of true love for God.'[999] In the paraphrase on John 8, the Pharisees 'choose not to know' because they are blinded by jealousy.[1000] In striking contrast are the lovely images of the Samaritan woman in the paraphrase on John 4. This 'godly sinner' had an 'open and willing inclination to believe,' she was 'eager to be instructed,' 'she hung on the words

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993 CWE 46 24
994 CWE 46 36
995 Cf CWE 46 80 and 90 respectively.
996 CWE 46 47. Compare the ambiguity in the representation of faith in the *Paraphrase on Romans*, 'New Testament Scholarship' 95 with n382.
997 CWE 46 84 and 89
998 CWE 46 85; cf the comparable statement in the paraphrase on Rom 8:28, 'Ours is the attempt, but the outcome depends on the decree of God' CWE 42 50.
999 CWE 46 73. For the 'slanderous Jews' to whom Jesus is speaking see ibidem 67.
1000 CWE 46 109

of the stranger … receptive to his teaching,' and her fellow citizens were also 'inclined to believe.'[1001]

In the paraphrases on the later chapters, the theme of love moves into the foreground. Strikingly Erasmus seems not to differentiate carefully among the Latin words expressing love, in particular *caritas, amor*, and *dilectio*, though at one point *affectus humanus* 'human feeling' is distinguished from *amor caelestis* 'heavenly love.'[1002] The charity of which the *Paraphrase* speaks is marked by the lavish and the unlimited. The supreme love of the Good Shepherd leads him to the expenditure of his own life; Mary's 'extraordinary' *amor* motivates her to pour out perfume of the 'most expensive kind,' and her 'unheard-of' *caritas* leads her to bathe his feet, while Peter will lay down his life because of his 'unbounded' *caritas*.[1003]

Erasmus leaves no doubt in these paraphrases that charity implies good works. In the paraphrase on John 10, the Good Shepherd goes out through the door of the sheepfold and proceeds to the 'duties of love [*caritas*],' 'fattening himself' on 'good works.'[1004] In chapter 14, faith and charity are brought together as the prerequisites for 'living in Christ': it is in 'love and gospel faith' [*caritas* and *fides*] that Jesus' disciples will 'cling' to him; it is through faith and love that his disciples will do the deeds their teacher has done. As faith implies obedience, love is defined by 'keeping the commandments.'[1005] In the paraphrase on chapter 15 we read that 'good works' can be produced only by those who 'hold fast' to Christ 'by faith and love.'[1006]

### *Luke*

The first four prefatory verses of Luke's Gospel suggest that Luke wishes his reader to understand as historiography the story he is about to tell. His Gospel reflects in its various parts the story of mankind from Adam to the promise of the consummation of the world; its frame of reference is thus not secular history but salvation-history. In the *Paraphrase on Luke* it is in the first three chapters and the last chapter especially that Erasmus undertook

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1001 CWE 46 54–61; for the quoted expressions see respectively 56 (godly sinner), 58 (open … believe), 55 (eager … teaching), and 61 (inclined to believe).
1002 CWE 46 171
1003 Cf CWE 46 132 (the Good Shepherd), 149 (Mary), 225 (Peter).
1004 CWE 46 131
1005 Cf CWE 46 170–4.
1006 CWE 46 177

to facilitate for the reader the recognition of Luke's purpose and vision as a historian.

In the *Paraphrase* Erasmus accents the prefatory character of Luke 1:1–4 by setting it off spatially from the Lukan narrative,[1007] giving it the character of a preface in which the Lukan persona can discourse about the nature of 'Christian' historiography and distinguish it from secular history. Like secular history, the gospel story is written to bring both utility and pleasure to the reader, and its authenticating characteristic is its *fides* 'fidelity,' 'trustworthiness.' For sacred history, however, utility must be understood as yielding the fruit of *pietas* 'godliness' and the persuasion that leads to salvation and eternal felicity. The trustworthiness of secular history depends upon the witness of eyes and ears and the reliability of personal witnesses. These also are the sources of fidelity in sacred historiography, but sacred history has also as particularly reliable evidence the congruence of prophecy and fulfilment, a congruency effected by *divina providentia* – the fact that events that belong to the story of salvation-history transpire only in accordance with the divine plan.

The paraphrases on Luke 1–3 appear as a prelude to the main narrative and come to focus on a question of *fides*: how can one believe a story so bizarre? The question finds an answer in three scenes in particular. First, the paraphrase observes that Mary's silent reflection on the events surrounding Jesus' birth and childhood implies a later disclosure by her to the apostles – the fidelity of the source is incontestable.[1008] Second, the paraphrase explains that the shepherds follow the angel's injunction not because they doubted but in order to tell the story with greater trustworthiness – as indeed they did: these simple souls did not know how to invent the story; they 'proclaimed what they had heard and seen as soon as they had heard and seen it.'[1009] Third, the story of Jesus' baptism concludes the paraphrastic narrative of events in the prelude by a summary of the witnesses that commend Christ to the world: the angels, Elizabeth, Simeon, Anna, the Magi, John the Baptist.[1010]

Salvation-history has at its centre the Christ event, which marks the distinction between the old age and the new. In the *Paraphrase on Luke*, the

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1007 While Erasmus introduces his paraphrases on all the Gospels with an appropriate prefatory introduction, only in the *Paraphrase on Luke* does a space in the text distinguish the preface from the remainder; cf CWE 47 22.

1008 Cf the paraphrase on Luke 2:51 CWE 47 99.

1009 Cf the paraphrase on Luke 2:17 CWE 47 76.

1010 Cf the paraphrase on Luke 3:22 CWE 47 118.

transformation from the old age to the new brings with it a transformation in moral and religious values, sometimes expressed in Pauline terms. In fact, the very values of the new age define the *pietas* to which the utility of the Lukan narrative is directed. These values are sharply marked in the paraphrastic interpretation of the Song of Mary: *versis rerum vicibus* 'the world has been turned upside down.' Mary is made to say that human wisdom and power have fallen; those who once seemed religious have been found to be ungodly; those who recognized their sin and thirsted for righteousness God has filled with good things; those who relied on good works God has rejected. Israel has been excluded from the kingdom of God, while the gentiles are invited in as the true sons of Abraham.[1011]

As the prelude concludes, the *Paraphrase* adds to the biblical genealogy (Luke 3:23–38) – without obvious warrant from the biblical text – a recapitulation of the events thus far recorded. The recapitulation is not, however, a mere summary of events but an exposition of events as saving-history, in which events in the Old Testament are shown to have a counterpart in the life of Jesus. A contrast is thus forced between the two ages, the old and the new, indicating a transformation with Christ at the centre.

This recapitulation has a parallel in the paraphrase on the final chapter, in particular on Luke 24:27, where the speech of Jesus extends into many pages. It functions ostensibly as the culminating example of the indisputable *fides* 'trustworthiness' of sacred history. It also represents, however, a rhetorical *amplificatio*, recapitulating Luke's narrative of saving-history to show how the saving events, chiefly as exhibited in the life of Christ, are congruent with the figures and prophecies of the Old Testament. The speech progresses in three stages. In the first (CWE 48 235–51) the fulfilment of the Law and the prophets is represented in terms of salvation-history in which Christ is the centre point between the age of the Law and the age of grace, in a time when the gospel admits the gentiles, and the church becomes the new Israel, the

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1011 For 'the world turned upside down' (paraphrase on Luke 1:52) see CWE 47 55; for the Song of Mary (Luke 1:46–55) see CWE 47 51–7. We should briefly note that Eramus indulged in tropological interpretation more extensively in the *Paraphrase on Luke* than he had done in the *Paraphrases* on Matthew and John. This enhanced the homiletic character of the *Paraphrase*, perhaps also the pleasure of the reader, and enabled a persistent recall of the many facets of *pietas*. The paraphrase on the prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32; CWE 48 74–87) offers a forceful example of the homiletic style with a tropological interpretation of many of the details of the story. Erasmus had specifically noted this parable in the *Ratio* as especially susceptible of effective storytelling; cf 632–4 and 678.

gospel kingdom whose power extends to the ends of the earth. There follows (CWE 48 251–69) a careful account of the life of Christ that recalls even the birth stories told earlier in the highly ornamented narrative of the *Paraphrase*, and that lays emphasis upon Christ's saving power and redemptive death. The final paragraph (CWE 48 269–70) points to the future, assuring from the proven fulfilment of promises past the *fides* of the predictions of events still to come.[1012] Throughout this recapitulation we do not lose sight of the thematic thread that with the new age comes an inversion of values that define the *pietas* of the Christian. Thus, at the end of his 'history' the paraphrastic Luke has, while recapitulating the story, pointed decisively to the historiographical values of fidelity and utility.

### *Mark*

Erasmus might well have wished to avoid paraphrasing the Gospel of Mark. The three Gospels thus far paraphrased each offered more or less distinctive material. Mark, Erasmus believed, was a mere epitome of Matthew: how could repetitiveness be avoided in a paraphrase?[1013] In fact, Erasmus succeeded in making the *Paraphrase on Mark* highly distinctive.

First, the *Paraphrase on Mark* was the only Gospel *Paraphrase* in which the text is prefaced with a life of the evangelist. Actually, the publication offered two brief sketches of the evangelist's life, one taken from Jerome's *De viris illustribus* and the other a Latin translation of the biography found in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History.*[1014] Both of these 'Lives' place the origin of the Gospel of Mark in the preaching of Peter in Rome and affirm that Mark recorded Peter's preaching as he heard it. Thus, for the perceptive reader the paraphrased Gospel could be transformed from its secondary status as an epitome into a pinnacle of interest as the very words of the Prince of the Apostles.

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1012 Cf the paraphrase on Mark 6:29 CWE 49 83: 'We owe our faith in the gospel' to the correspondence between Old Testament figures and prophecies fulfilled in Christ. With this *amplificatio* in the *Paraphrase on Luke* one may compare the exposition of the 'congruencies' in the life of Christ in the *Ratio* 546–50 and the exposition of Christian doctrine afforded by the Ethiopian's request for illumination in the paraphrase on Acts 8:35 CWE 50 62.

1013 See the annotation on Mark 1:1 (*initium evangelii*) for Erasmus' view of Mark as an epitome; and Ep 1255:74–5 for Erasmus' worry that the similarity of materials in the Gospels discouraged paraphrase.

1014 Cf *Saint Jerome On Illustrious Men* 8.1–5 trans Thomas Halton FOTC 100 (Washington DC 1999) 17–18; Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 2.15.1–16.1.

Second, the *Paraphrase on Mark* indulges in tropological interpretation to an extent well beyond that of any of the other *Paraphrases*.[1015] The interpretations are not necessarily unique to this *Paraphrase*. Some can be found elsewhere in Erasmus' New Testament scholarship, some belong to the Christian hermeneutical tradition;[1016] but in the *Paraphrase on Mark* they are pervasive, particularly in the first thirteen chapters, and they are sometimes bizarre. The Marcan images may be interpreted in terms of salvation-history: in the story of the incarceration and death of John the Baptist 'the darkness of the prison corresponds to the shadows and figures of the Law,' his decapitation signifies that the true head of the church is Jesus Christ.[1017] The healing stories may be allegorized to reflect aspects of the life, teaching, and practice of the church, for example, the process of personal salvation. The deaf mute of Mark 7:31–7 offers a double, though parallel, correspondence: the healing saliva is Jesus, the heavenly wisdom; at the same time, it is the exhortation of the 'evangelical doctors' who, in 'recalling us to the flock' of Christ urge us 'to profess the faith of the gospel.'[1018] Or the Gospel's images may be seen as metaphors of the inner emotional life, of the struggle between the passions and the spiritual life lived by the grace of charity. Peter's mother-in-law lies ill with a fever but, touched by Jesus, rises up to serve her guests. This corresponds to one who is afflicted with a 'passion for carnal pleasures' but 'by the touch of [Jesus'] Spirit becomes a servant to chastity, purity, and sobriety.'[1019]

Third, none of the *Paraphrases* on the other Gospels admits the characteristics of a commentary so boldly as that on Mark. Erasmus had repeatedly claimed that a *Paraphrase* was a kind of commentary, but one that differed nevertheless from a commentary: in a *Paraphrase* there was no place as in a commentary for the solution of exegetical problems, the representation of

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1015 Cf, in the dedicatory letter to Ferdinand, Erasmus' reticence to appeal extravagantly to allegory in the *Paraphrase on John* Ep 1333:423–5. But there is considerable allegorization in the *Paraphrase on Luke*, a remarkable example of which is found in the paraphrase on the story of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11–16), where the widow is allegorized as the church.

1016 Cf the notes in CWE 49, which identify in Christian literature tropological interpretations found in the *Paraphrase*.

1017 Cf the paraphrase on Mark 6:29 CWE 49 83; and compare the paraphrase on Mark 1:14 CWE 49 21–2.

1018 Cf CWE 49 95.

1019 Cf CWE 49 25 (on Mark 1:31).

alternative views, or the voice of the interpreter.[1020] In the *Paraphrase on Mark*, however, the interpretation is so explicit that these aspects of a commentary subtly but unmistakably emerge. Three different interpretations are offered for Jesus' departure from Capernaum recorded in Mark 1:35–9.[1021] After the story of the healing of the paralytic (Mark 2:1–10), the paraphrast stops the narrative with a deliberate, indeed intriguing, call to the reader to consider the interpretation of the miracle: just as a painting or a sculpture deserves close and careful study if we are to appreciate it fully, so we must stand back and look again at the meaning of this story. If the voice is theoretically that of the evangelist, the voice actually heard is not that of the storyteller but that of the interpreter.[1022] The voice of the interpreter is heard frequently when the paraphrast calls attention explicitly to the figurative character of the Gospel's prose, as in the exposition of scriptural typology in the narrative of the triumphal entry and earlier in the discussion of tropes, specifically hyperbole, in the speech of Jesus.[1023] Similarly the paraphrases call attention to exegetical problems and undertake to resolve them, as in the apparent disobedience of the leper, who disregarded Jesus' command to be silent.[1024]

Strikingly, in this *Paraphrase* the voice of the commentator at points merges into that of the homilist. In fact, the rhetoric of the homilist in the paraphrases on the Markan text can be so direct, the idiom so translucently contemporary, as to vitiate almost entirely the illusion of the first-century setting: the Gospel paraphrased is speaking directly to the contemporary reader. The paraphrase stops the narrative of the leper to interpret its 'salutary lesson' and appeals forcefully to the reader: 'You, too, must hurry to Jesus, whatever your sin … he is coming to meet you … fall at his feet … Call out to him, but call with deep faith in your heart.'[1025] The story of the Gerasene demoniac becomes the occasion for a message of hope to a bleak collection

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1020 Cf eg Epp 710:49–52, 1255:36–42, 1381:441–50; also the *Prologus supputationis* and the *Divinationes ad notata Bedae* ASD IX-5 24:121–3, 74:476, 143:22–35. Cf also CWE 42 xv–xvii. Erasmus' understanding of his work of paraphrasing is illuminated in his responses to the criticism of Béda and also of Alberto Pio; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 269–72 (Béda) and 280–1 (Pio).

1021 Cf CWE 49 27.

1022 Cf CWE 49 34–5. For the same analogy used of Chrysostom's writing see Ep 1800:167–85.

1023 Cf CWE 49 135–6 (triumphal entry, Mark 11:1–11) and CWE 49 78 (tropes, Mark 6:9).

1024 Cf CWE 49 29 (on Mark 1:44). Cf also the problem of Jesus' apparent ignorance in the healing of blind Bartimaeus, CWE 49 133–4 (on Mark 10:51).

1025 Cf CWE 49 28–9 (on Mark 1:42).

of formidable sinners, where the reference to 'idolater' does not diminish the force of the sixteenth-century allusion: 'Hear these words idolater, fornicator … rapist … hooliganpoisoner, assassin – do not despair. Only hurry to Jesus … Acknowledge and confess … Do not ascribe it to your merits but … to God, who has mercy.'[1026] Again, following the story of blind Bartimaeus, the paraphrast 'detains' the 'good reader' to consider the lesson: 'Whenever you are called to Jesus … you shuffle, delay, hesitate … Why do you not hasten to Jesus with the greatest faith … Jesus will not call you to salvation once you have died.'[1027] The occasional reference in the *Paraphrase* to crowds gathering into the basilicas to hear preachers contributes to the immediacy of this homiletic hermeneutic.[1028]

The sense of contemporaneity is enhanced by the persistent interpretation of the healing miracles as images of the process – as commonly understood in the sixteenth century – by which individuals come to salvation, with, however, an Erasmian emphasis on faith. Salvation begins for the individual when an initial dissatisfaction with oneself becomes a hatred of sin, with the potential even of despair. The remedy follows in the recognition of one's utter lack of merits and the consequent trust that must be placed in Jesus. The next step is profession of faith along with baptism, together leading to a life of piety. The complete analogy may not be drawn for every miracle, but any miracle may illustrate a part or parts of the seeker's progress. Emphatically central in this image of saving activity is the role of faith. The apostles were sent on their mission to preach throughout the towns of Israel 'repentance of [one's] former life in order to bring perfect righteousness through faith in the gospel.' The paraphrase adds, 'For this is the first principle of the evangelical doctrine: to believe what you hear and to have faith in what is promised.'[1029] The paralytic of Mark 2 is an image of the sinner filled with a 'wonderful dissatisfaction' even to the point of despair, but he acknowledged his disease and had faith in the physician. Indeed, faith carries so much weight with the Lord Jesus that even the vicarious faith of the porters was effective, for 'imploring faith is what is primarily efficacious with Christ.'[1030] In the paraphrase on Mark 5 the 'imperfect faith' of Jairus stands in contrast to the

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1026 Cf CWE 49 68 (on Mark 5:20).
1027 Cf CWE 49 133 (on Mark 10:49–50).
1028 Cf for example the paraphrases on Mark 3:20 and 8:6 CWE 49 51 and 98.
1029 Cf CWE 49 79 (on Mark 6:12); also the paraphrase on Mark 3:31, 'all sins are forgiven on the strength of faith alone' CWE 49 54.
1030 For the quotations see CWE 49 36 and 35 respectively.

wonderful faith of the woman with a haemorrhage.[1031] To blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10) Jesus granted salvation 'in return for faith, not works.' He recovered his sight 'not because he deserved it but because he believed.'[1032]

### *Acts*

Erasmus liked to think that Acts belonged closely together with Luke as the second part of 'evangelical history': in the narrative of the Gospel we see the seed sown; the story of Acts shows how it took root, sprang up, and bore fruit.[1033] While Erasmus had, as we have seen, set the *Paraphrase on Luke* within a solidly historical perspective, nevertheless he frequently engaged the reader in the course of his paraphrastic exposition with tropological interpretations presented in a homiletic manner. With the *Paraphrase on Mark* Erasmus went much further in this direction. The *Paraphrase on Acts*, however, follows our expectation for historical narrative much more closely. While Luke in paraphrase remains a Gospel, the *Paraphrase on Acts* simulates ecclesiastical history.

Erasmus sets the stage for his paraphrastic history by a prefatory 'frontispiece,' the *Peregrinatio apostolorum Petri et Pauli cum ratione temporum* 'The Travels of the Apostles Peter and Paul with a Chronology.' This was his own composition, modelled on a Greek travelogue, the *Apodemia Paulou tou apostolou* 'The Travels of the Apostle Paul,' with which he had prefaced his text of Acts in the editions of his New Testament from 1519. Erasmus' *Peregrinatio apostolorum*, however, differed widely from the Greek *Apodemia* in reflecting a much more vigorous application of historical methodology. In the *Peregrinatio apostolorum* Erasmus constructs the historical record from an analysis of available texts, evaluates the nonbiblical sources – Jerome and Eusebius – works through historical problems, and provides perspective. The *Apodemia* had offered little more than an itinerary with a chronicle.[1034]

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1031 Cf CWE 49 69.

1032 Cf CWE 49 134.

1033 Cf the annotation on Acts 1:1 (*primum quidem sermonem*) ASD VI-6 177:14–17.

1034 The *Peregrinatio apostolorum* prefaced the *Paraphrase on Acts* in the Froben editions of 1524 (folio and octavo) but was omitted from the subsequent editions of the *Paraphrases* (1534 and 1535). It was introduced as a preface to the text of Acts, following immediately the *Apodemia,* in the fourth and fifth editions of the New Testament (1527 and 1535). It is the final piece translated in this volume; cf 949–77. For the *Apodemia* in *1519* see 109.

In the *Tomus primus* of 1524 the *Paraphrase on Acts* is less expansive than any of the *Paraphrases* on the Gospels.[1035] Several factors may account for the brevity. Time was short. As we have seen, the *Paraphrase on Mark* was not completed until the middle of December 1523, and Froben evidently wanted Acts for the *Tomus primus* published in March.[1036] Further, Erasmus had no patristic commentaries to work through as he wrote,[1037] for which he expresses profound regret in his annotation on Acts 1:1 (*primum quidem sermonem*).[1038] But it is possible that Erasmus quite deliberately undertook to construct a narrative that moved with speed in order to capture the intrigue and drama of historical events. Certainly tropological interpretations are minimized and exegetical expositions are relatively few.[1039]

The *Paraphrase* is characterized by other features appropriate to historical narrative. Erasmus frequently develops into a detailed imaginable scene an account that the biblical Acts traced in outline only. In Acts 13:15 the leaders of the synagogue invite Paul and Barnabas to speak; in paraphrase the invitation is given an effective dramatic setting: the apostles take their seat like everyone else, the leaders recognize from the dress of the apostles that they are visitors, who 'gave every appearance of being upright men,' and so sent pages to deliver the invitation.[1040] Further, Erasmus invites the reader to envision the story from the perspective of its personae. Not only is the psychological motivation for action constantly exposed, but the effect of circumstances

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1035 For every column of the Latin text of Acts in the 1522 edition of the New Testament there are approximately 1.8 pages of paraphrase; compare the ratio in Luke, where for every column of Latin text there are approximately 3.6 pages of paraphrase.

1036 In addition to the *Tomus primus*, Erasmus also published in March 1524 a new edition of the *Colloquies*, containing four new pieces, and the *Exomologesis*.

1037 The notes in CWE 50 suggest, however, that Erasmus did look fairly carefully at the *Gloss*, at the *Postilla* of Hugh of St Cher and the commentary of Bede (perhaps both, largely as found in the *Gloss*), and the *Postilla* of Nicholas of Lyra.

1038 Cf ASD VI-6 178:23–9. For Erasmus' later acquisition of Chrysostom's *Homilies on Acts* see 287–8 with nn1219, 1224.

1039 But two exegetical expositions, though relatively short, are noteworthy. In the paraphrase on Acts 2:42 CWE 50 24–5 Erasmus offers an exposition of the Lord's Prayer, which is, however, integrated into the narrative action as a primitive model of corporate prayer; in the paraphrase on Acts 8:35 CWE 50 62 a brief exposition of saving-history recalls a similar but much longer interlude in the paraphrase on the last chapter of Luke, where the narrative of events is interrupted by a lengthy theological exposition of Luke 24:27; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 247–8.

1040 Cf CWE 50 86.

and events on the actors in the story is also seen from their point of view. When Paul bade farewell to the Ephesian elders, 'they fell upon his neck and kissed him as though greedily seizing a supply of what was soon to be torn away.' They escorted him to the ship and 'followed him with their eyes as far as they could.'[1041] Moreover, in the *Paraphrase* events are set in a broad background and in a sociological context. Places have a geographical location, cities each have a distinctive character, and Roman power enters into the narrative not as an abstraction but as a living force. With only a few words added to the biblical text, Gallio, Felix, Festus – all of them Roman governors – and Lysias, the Roman tribune, become in paraphrase recognizably and distinctly Roman.[1042] Peoples, too, have character. Erasmus effects a fine narrative contrast when in chapter 14 he portrays the Lycaonians as barbarians, foreign in speech, impulsive and too credulous, eager to acclaim the apostles as gods, while in chapter 17 he characterizes the Athenians as sophisticated and skeptical, looking upon Paul with a mixture of amusement and disdain, their speech betraying their vain hauteur.[1043] The *Paraphrase* transforms a religious text into a very human story.

Many of the speeches in Acts are in paraphrase marked and pointed in a manner that reflects speech making in traditional historical narrative, where the development of the argument is shaped into a well-defined rhetorical structure. Thus Stephen's address to the council in Acts 7 is, in paraphrase, represented as a speech of defence and begins appropriately by making the central 'issue' one of definition – the classical *status definitionis*: what is blasphemy?[1044] Stephen then presents his case in two movements: in the first he shows that he is not guilty of blasphemy against God, Moses, and the prophets; and in the second he shows that he is not guilty of blasphemy against the temple. The paraphrase on Acts 19 casts the speech of Demetrius into the form of the classical deliberative speech, which considers in turn the utility and honour of the action proposed.[1045]

We can see the character of traditional historical narrative also in the moral generalizations, in the appeal to the past for exempla, and in the interest in the origins of contemporary institutions. Erasmus frequently moralizes the contrast between the simple and the powerful: 'Recognize that the gospel

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1041 Cf CWE 50 125–6 (on Acts 20:37–8).

1042 For the events in which these officials are portrayed see Acts 18:12–17 (Gallio), 23:23–24:27 (Felix), 25:1–27 and 26:24–32 (Festus), 22:24–30 and 23:12–30 (Lysias).

1043 Cf Acts 14:8–18 CWE 50 92–3 (Lycaonians) and Acts 17:16–34 CWE 50 107–11 (Athenians).

1044 Cf CWE 50 49.

1045 Acts 19:23–7; cf CWE 50 118–19.

is acceptable to the common people; seldom do the mighty of this world come to agreement with it.'[1046] In a notable generalization, the paraphrase on the story of the last days of Herod reflects on kings and kingship: kings become tyrants when people fawn upon them and they in turn fawn upon the people.[1047] Institutions in their origin, cited as exempla, establish an authentic benchmark against which contemporary institutions may be measured. Thus the *Paraphrase* draws attention, often sharply, to the institutions of primitive Christianity: the catechumenate, ordination, ecclesiastical decision by popular vote, the Eucharistic liturgy, the primacy of Peter with a repeated emphasis on the simple lifestyle of the apostles who constituted the original episcopacy.[1048] Peter and John, 'princes of the apostolic order' go to the temple 'without horse or mule, without a royal bodyguard – but attend the apostolic procession.'[1049] They are the 'nobles' of a 'new city, poor in possessions but rich in the gifts of the Spirit.'[1050] In the midst of a grand council they are merely 'two fishermen with a retinue like themselves.'[1051] And 'Peter, prince of apostles … lodged with a certain workman, a tanner named Simon.'[1052]

While Erasmus has attempted to shape the book of Acts into a *Paraphrase* that in manner and style approaches conventional historical narrative, he has not left the *Paraphrase* without a clearly evident theological bias, articulated in a formula with only minor variations: salvation is to all through faith. There are occasional qualifications: faith alone, faith and baptism, faith and obedience; and faith may at points be defined, for example, as the 'simple readiness to believe'[1053] or may be associated with other virtues, such as hope. In the paraphrase on Peter's sermon on Pentecost, Christ himself is characterized as the divine exemplar of faith. In describing the humiliation of Christ the language points to the chief components of faith – reliance, confidence, hope: Jesus of Nazareth placed his entire defence in God on whose help he relied. His trust enabled him to rejoice in suffering and always to obey the will of God. He had placed all his hope not in works but in God. 'Thus through him there has been shown also to us the path to eternal life.'[1054]

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1046 CWE 50 31 (on Acts 4:4)
1047 CWE 50 83 (on Acts 12:20–3)
1048 Cf CWE 50 64 with n15 (catechumenate), 47 with n10 (ordination), 10 and 12–13 (popular vote), 24 with nn118, 121 (liturgy), and 17 (Petrine primacy).
1049 CWE 50 26 (on Acts 3:1)
1050 CWE 50 37 (on Acts 4:33)
1051 CWE 50 43 (on Acts 5:27)
1052 CWE 50 69 (on Acts 9:43)
1053 CWE 50 97
1054 CWE 50 20 (on Acts 2:26–8)

# IX THE NEW TESTAMENT SCHOLARSHIP: MOUNTING OPPOSITION AND SELF-DEFENCE (1524–9)

After 1524 Erasmus developed no new forms for his New Testament scholarship. He continued to revise what he had done: there were major revisions in his New Testament in 1527 and 1535, and revisions also in the *Paraphrases*: in those on the apostolic Epistles in 1532, in those on the Gospels and Acts in 1535, and on both in 1534. In the later years of his life, Erasmus spent much of his energy in the production of editions of the Fathers, in continuing efforts to advocate the ideals of Christian humanism and shape humanistic education, in defining his position in relation to the growing force of the radical religious reformation, and in encountering hostile criticism to his New Testament scholarship. His debate with the critics of his New Testament work speaks abundantly, if often repetitively, of the fundamental principles that shaped that work, a debate therefore that invites some elucidation here. In the midst of these efforts, political and religious events brought Erasmus' personal life into a critical juncture that forced him to move from Basel to Freiburg in April 1529. He would return to Basel only in the early summer of 1535, with little more than a year to live.

**Turmoil in Europe**

The years from 1524 to 1529, when Erasmus finally fled from Basel, were tumultuous times in Europe, creating situations of unrest in which not only Erasmus but also his New Testament scholarship became entangled. In the political arena the hostilities, overt in 1521, between Charles and Francis, along with their respective allies, continued. Determined to regain Milan, Francis engaged the imperial forces once again, resulting in his disastrous defeat at Pavia, some miles south of Milan, on 24 February 1525. Taken captive, Francis was held at Madrid for over a year and released finally on 17 March 1526.[1055] Francis had been a supporter of Erasmus and other humanists; his absence consequently gave freer rein to the Parlement of Paris, suspicious as

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1055 For Francis' invasion of the duchy of Milan and his defeat see Ep 1519 n29; for the negotiations leading to the Treaty of Madrid and Francis' release see Epp 1647:26–31 with n5 and 1665 n7; for the sequel to the release and continuing hostilities see Epp 1686 n3 and 2030 n7.

it generally was of the humanist movement, to attack men like Erasmus.[1056] Thus in 1525 and the first months of 1526 Béda pressed his charges against the *Paraphrases* of Erasmus, and Cousturier published his attack on all new translations of the Bible.[1057]

Fear of the imperial ambitions of Charles led to the formation of the League of Cognac (22 May 1526) to prevent Charles' expansion into Italy.[1058] Troops predominantly German and fighting for Charles V under the command of Charles de Bourbon pillaged northern Italy and, eager for booty, demanded to be led to Rome. Arriving at Rome, Bourbon was killed on the first day of fighting, and the troops, undisciplined and without effective leadership, broke through the walls on 6 May 1527 and pillaged Rome for about two months.[1059] Clement, some of the cardinals, and their retainers fled to the Castel Sant' Angelo, where Clement capitulated on 6 June, with terms that permitted free passage from the fortress for some of those within. Among those released was Alberto Pio. Clement therefore sent Pio to Paris to represent papal interests at the French court. Critic of Erasmus' *Paraphrases* since the mid-1520s, Pio had been lost to Erasmus after the sack of Rome. However, in 1528 Erasmus discovered that he was in Paris about to publish a critique of both Erasmus himself and what he represented, a critique that had been in manuscript form since 1526.[1060] Although Erasmus was undoubtedly troubled by the sack of Rome, he says surprisingly little about it in his letters.[1061]

Meanwhile, Christian Europe was being threatened by the remarkable military successes of Suleiman the Magnificent, who had become sultan in 1520 upon the death of his father. In 1521 Suleiman took Belgrade and in 1526 defeated the Christian forces of Hungary at the famous battle of Mohács; he was stopped only in 1529 when he was forced to retreat from the gates of

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1056 For Francis as protector of humanists and for the 'freer rein' afforded to the opponents of humanistic learning by Francis' absence see Epp 1558 n29, 1591 n8, 1674 n27, and 1722 introduction; also CEBR II 51–2.

1057 Cf Epp 1571 introduction and 1664 n1 (Béda), 1571 n10 (Cousturier).

1058 The league united France, Florence, Venice, Milan, and the pope against Charles (Ep 1665 n7). Clement did not sign until 4 June (CWE 84 xlvii–xlviii). Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 279 with n1180.

1059 Ep 1831 n3

1060 Cf CWE 84 xlvii–xlviii and 'New Testament Scholarship' 278–9 with nn1176, 1182.

1061 On the sack of Rome see C.R.Thompson's comments in the introduction to the colloquy 'Charon' CWE 40 819–20; and for Erasmus' rather minimalist comments see Epp 1831:19–24 (29 May 1527) and 2059:4–11 (1 October 1528). For comments by Erasmus' correspondents see Epp 1839:110–13 and 1850:15–31.

Vienna.[1062] The king of Hungary, Louis II, married to Mary, sister of Charles and Ferdinand, had perished in the battle of Mohács. Dynastic arrangements dating to 1515 and earlier resulted after Louis' death in a contest between Ferdinand and the Hungarian-born John Zápolyai for the crown. Both had themselves elected king in the autumn of 1526; in the summer of 1527 Ferdinand invaded Hungary, forcing John to flee, though John was restored to his throne in 1529 with the help of Suleiman.[1063] The instability created by the contested kingship caught Erasmus in some embarrassment. In a letter to Sigismund I, king of Poland, dated May 1527, just before Ferdinand's successful invasion of Hungary, Erasmus named John 'king of Hungary.'[1064] The letter offended Caspar Ursinus Velius, an adviser of Ferdinand, and a letter more than a year later (15 July 1528) to Ferdinand addressed him as 'king of Hungary and Bohemia.'[1065] On the next day, Erasmus wrote to Caspar Ursinus Velius, claiming that in an edition of the *Paraphrase on John* published in the autumn of 1527 he had of his own accord changed the original title 'prince' in the dedicatory letter (Ep 1333) to the new title 'king': 'Although I had dedicated it [the *Paraphrase*] to Ferdinand before he was made king, I changed the title of my own accord … without yet knowing how it would turn out.'[1066] However, 'no surviving copy of any authorized edition of [this] *Paraphrase* contains the change of Ferdinand's title,' as Erasmus claims.[1067]

Closer to Basel, where Erasmus was residing, the Peasant War created fear and anxiety. Beginning in June 1524 at Stühlingen, not far from Basel, it spread rapidly through much of south-western Germany, where the peasants were not effectively subdued until the summer of 1525. The war continued in eastern Germany, and a second rebellion in Salzburg had to be crushed

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1062 In 1517 the Fifth Lateran Council (1512–17) had called for a crusade against the Turks; cf CWE 39 610 n19 and Michael Heath's introduction to Erasmus' *De bello Turcico* (1530) CWE 64 202–9. On the Turkish menace see also *Ratio* 579 and 622 with nn476 and 690.

1063 Cf the accounts 'John Zápolyai' and 'Louis II' in CEBR II 241–3 and 352–3; also Ep 1810 n8. Erasmus briefly considers the conflict between John and Ferdinand in the *De bello Turcico*, noting: 'It is not my place to comment on matters about which too little is known' CWE 64 257.

1064 Cf Ep 1819:146–57 with n24.

1065 Cf Ep 2005:1 and 7, with the introduction and n1.

1066 Ep 2008:2–5. For Ferdinand's titles 'before he was made king' see Ep 1935 nn5 and 8.

1067 Cf Ep 2008 n1 and CWE 42 xxvii, where Mynors notes Erasmus' claim but offers no other evidence for such a publication.

in 1526.[1068] In his letters Erasmus speaks frequently of the uprising. Though Basel suffered no devastation due to its irenic policy, elsewhere there was much destruction, the peasants targeting especially the monastic houses.[1069] In several letters of October 1525 Erasmus characterized the war as 'agony in the countryside,' 'bloodletting,' a 'bloody crisis' that 'sent about 100,000 peasants into the world of Orcus,' and claimed that 'human blood flowed in torrents.'[1070] Noël Béda, reprimanding Erasmus for advocating vernacular translations of the Bible, expressed his belief that such translations were at the root of the uprising, a point Erasmus was quick to deny.[1071] For Erasmus the uprising had the immediate effect of confining him to Basel, since he could not safely move elsewhere, as he claims he would like to have done.[1072]

However, the events in Basel would eventually force Erasmus to move to Freiburg in April 1529, as Basel gradually espoused the Reformation. Already in 1522 some of the more radical adherents of reform had created a disturbance in Basel when, on Palm Sunday 'a number of citizens had defiantly eaten pork,' creating 'an astonishing uproar over the gospel.'[1073] In consequence, Erasmus had offered recommendations for reform to the bishop of Basel, Christoph von Utenheim, urging the relaxation of rules on clerical celibacy, fasting, and choice of foods.[1074] The movement for reform soon found its leaders in Basel, above all Johannes Oecolampadius and Conradus Pellicanus, both friends of Erasmus – Oecolampadius having served as

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1068 For a succinct account of the war ('the greatest social upheaval of the century') see CWE 11 xi–xii. For its continuation in the Austrian lands see Ep 1590 n3.

1069 For Basel's policy see Ep 1603 n6; for destruction of monastic houses, Epp 1598:19–21 with n6 and 1871:5–9 with n2. For the report of Johann von Botzheim see Ep 1540:16–25.

1070 Cf respectively Epp 1632:11–13, 1633:20–1, 1635:17; cf Ep 1584:27 (2 July 1525) 'a bloody tragedy.'

1071 Cf Epp 1579:180–4 (Béda) and 1581:827–32 (Erasmus). Compare *Hyperaspistes* 1 CWE 76 114 with n102, where Erasmus reports the widespread belief that Luther's pamphlets 'provided the occasion for these uprisings.' Cf also ibidem 170–1 with nn398, 399.

1072 Perhaps especially to claim his pension, for which he was required to move to Brabant; cf Epp 1585:27–30, 1586:24–33, 1601:10–16, and 1553:22–43.

1073 Cf Ep 1293:14 with n8.

1074 The pamphlet *De esu carnium*, written in April, revised and published in August 1522 (cf Ep 1274 n7), would – along with Erasmus' New Testament scholarship and the *Colloquies* – become a focus for attack by Catholic critics; cf Epp 1581:798–807 with n100, 1341A:1306–13, and 'New Testament Scholarship' 221 with n885. For a detailed account of the events on Passion Sunday 1522, and the publication history of Erasmus' treatise see CWE 73 xxii–xxix.

Hebrew consultant for the *Novum instrumentum* of 1516, while Pellicanus helped with Erasmus' patristic editions. Both men were made professors at the University of Basel in 1523, and Oecolampadius preacher at St Martin's in 1525, while Pellicanus accepted Zwingli's invitation in 1526 to teach at the University of Zürich. Both men shared a Zwinglian view of the Eucharist, replacing the doctrine of transubstantiation with a symbolic interpretation of the bread and wine – such people became known as Sacramentarians. When Erasmus came to believe that Pellicanus was publicizing his – that is, Erasmus' – view as essentially Sacramentarian, he reacted angrily, and their friendship was broken, to be restored only on Erasmus' deathbed.[1075] The reform movement continued to gain ground in Basel. In June 1527 the city council 'abolished religious festivals and, in some churches, the mass itself.'[1076] Indeed, Erasmus began to fear expulsion.[1077] Two years later, in a popular movement led by the guilds, reform took control. Oecolampadius, now in a position of leadership in the religious reconstruction, remained friendly with Erasmus and encouraged him to remain in Basel.[1078] But Erasmus feared that continuing residence in Basel would signal to his enemies his approbation of the reform movement there,[1079] and he left for Freiburg on 13 April 1529.[1080]

From his description of the *Bildersturm* – the great destruction of images that took place on 8 and 9 February 1529[1081] – we can catch some sense of Erasmus' emotional response to the Reformation in Basel as it approached its decisive crisis. 'No statues were left in the churches, or in vestibules, or cloisters, or monasteries. All painted images were covered over with whitewash. Anything that would burn was thrown on the fire; what would not burn was torn into shreds. Neither value nor artistic merit ensured that an

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1075 Cf Epp 1637–40 (October 1525) and 1792A (March 1527). For Pellicanus' irenic response to Erasmus' anger see 'New Testament Scholarship' 286 with n1212; and for the deathbed reconciliation see CEBR III 66, Ep 3072, and 'New Testament Scholarship' 322 with n1364. For the Sacramentarians and an account of Erasmus' relation with them see the introduction to the *Detectio praestigiarum* CWE 78 148–62, especially 150 n18. In this relatively short work, published in 1526, Erasmus attempted to show that in his position on the Eucharist he stood with Catholic tradition.

1076 Cf Ep 1844 n16.

1077 Cf Ep 1792A:17, 41–2.

1078 Cf Ep 2158:50–64 and CEBR III 25–6.

1079 Cf Ep 2145:23–6.

1080 For the sequence of events in the reform movement in Basel from late December 1528 to 13 April 1529 when Erasmus left the city see Ep 2097 n1.

1081 For the dates see Ep 2097 n1.

object would be spared. Soon the mass was totally prohibited; it was not even permissible to celebrate the sacred rite at home or attend it in a neighbouring village.'[1082]

In a reflective letter to the theologian Ludwig Baer written just two weeks before his departure to Freiburg, Erasmus reviewed his career to demonstrate his loyalty to the Catholic church and to explain the hostility he had aroused. He located the root of hostility in his advocacy of the languages and literature, and he acknowledged the role played by his criticism of theologians, of clergy, and of the practices of the church. But it is to the New Testament that he points as the most decisive factor. 'What has hurt me most in the eyes of certain people … is the fact that in my *Annotations* I point to many passages that were misunderstood by the learned doctors of an earlier age; and that, to induce the lazy to interest themselves in the philosophy of Christ, I have produced an intelligible version of the New Testament in a somewhat purer language[1083] … these people … do not recognize the proper meanings or the nuances of words, nor are they familiar with metaphors and wordplay, which impart to style much of its grace and charm … The scholastic way of speaking is certainly acceptable – in scholastic debates, where the subtleties of argument must be made clear in whatever language is available. But in sermons and in books that are produced not just to teach but also to move the reader, how dreadfully flat that style appears!'[1084] In this striking retrospective, Erasmus' understanding of the purpose and value of his New Testament scholarship has remained essentially unchanged in this critical period of his later life from that found in the accounts given when he first published his *Novum instrumentum* and his *Paraphrases*.

**New Challenges to the New Testament Scholarship (1524–9)**

The *Novum instrumentum* had aroused criticism almost from the moment of its publication – indeed, as we have seen, even before its publication. The early *Paraphrases* had generally been warmly received, but following the publication of the *Paraphrases* on the Gospels, new challenges to Erasmus' New Testament scholarship arose in which the *Paraphrases* received a large measure of attention. It was a criticism intensified by the ambiguity felt in Erasmus'

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1082 Ep 2158:31–7
1083 Cf Ep 2136 n39, where it is argued that 'intelligible version of the New Testament' is a reference to the Latin translation, not to the *Paraphrases*.
1084 Ep 2136:231–52

relation with Luther. In fact, in the broadening division between Catholics and Lutherans, Erasmus came to be seen as a 'heretic to both sides.'[1085] The most persistent articulation of the criticism of Erasmus' New Testament scholarship came from Catholics and was centred in the Universities of Paris and Louvain, in the Roman Academy, an association of humanists and theologians in Rome, and in the monastic orders in Spain. In the reform movement, the public debate between Erasmus and Luther sharply addressed the hermeneutical presuppositions underlying Erasmus' scholarship. Erasmus' published response to his critics opens a window on his own understanding of his work on Scripture.

### *Martin Luther and Reform*

Although Luther was laudatory of Erasmus in his *Commentary on Galatians*, published in 1519,[1086] he seems nevertheless to have been critical of Erasmus' work from the publication in 1516 of the first edition of the New Testament. If Luther is the friend to whom Spalatinus referred in a letter to Erasmus, he had already in 1516 criticized Erasmus' understanding of justification and original sin.[1087] In 1522 Pirckheimer reported that 'Luther's party' criticized Erasmus' paraphrase on Romans 9, 'where they protest that you have turned upside down … Paul's words and intention.'[1088] Erasmus acknowledged the charge both in his response to Pirckheimer and again, almost a year later, in a letter to Marcus Laurinus.[1089] Although in April 1524, when he was hoping for Erasmus' support, Luther praised Erasmus for his contribution to learning, his evaluation of Erasmus nearly a year earlier was distinctly negative, as we have seen in the letter he wrote to Oecolampadius on 20 June 1523, in which he complained that Erasmus' biblical work actually hindered the study of Scripture.[1090] By late August 1523 Erasmus was aware of Luther's opinion.[1091]

Although Erasmus would later regard the subject of 'faith' as central to the role Luther played in the Reformation,[1092] he had good grounds for

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1085 Cf CWE 76 xlvii.
1086 Cf CWE 76 109 with nn78, 79, 81.
1087 Cf Ep 501:50–5 and 15n, where it is implied that the 'friend' of 501:50 is Luther; for Luther's further criticism of Erasmus in 1517 and 1518 see CEBR II 361.
1088 Ep 1265:12–17
1089 Cf Epp 1268:88–94, 1342:1022–36.
1090 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 219 with n868.
1091 Cf Ep 1384:57–63.
1092 Cf Ep 1601:6–8 (25 August 1525).

targeting 'free will' in a work that would distinguish himself from the 'party of Luther.' Indeed, after the *De libero arbitrio* was published in September 1524, Melanchthon wrote to Erasmus and conceded that 'all Luther's contentions, taken by and large, either revolve around the question of free will or involve the use of ceremonies.'[1093]

The appeal to Scripture plays a significant part in the *De libero arbitrio* and in the two books of *Hyperaspistes*, which in late 1526 and 1527 followed Luther's response to the *De libero arbitrio*. Appropriately, therefore, this controversy with Luther includes an important discussion about hermeneutics, a discussion in which Erasmus reaffirms principles enunciated earlier in his New Testament scholarship. Erasmus' project, whether in respect to his New Testament or his *Paraphrases* was devoted to the clarification of Scripture. It was a clarification derived fundamentally from philology, but a clarification that was authenticated by appeal to tradition, for even with the clarification of philology ambiguities of interpretation remained in Scripture; to resolve such ambiguities one did well to consult the tradition of exegesis, especially as represented in the Fathers. Erasmus was not prepared to agree that private individuals inspired by the Spirit could in all cases discern the intent of Scripture.[1094] In *Hyperaspistes* 1 Erasmus characterized Luther and his followers as those 'who profess that there is nothing in Holy Scripture which is obscure to you as long as you know grammar.'[1095] Erasmus countered this view with a medieval commonplace articulated already in the *Ratio*: 'No one denies that there is truth as clear as crystal in Holy Scripture, but sometimes it is wrapped and covered up by figures and enigmas so that it needs scrutiny and an interpreter, either because God wanted it in this way to arouse us from dullness and also to set us to work … or because truth is more pleasant and affects us more deeply when it has been dug out and shines forth to us through the cover of darkness … or because [God] did not want that treasure of wisdom to be prostituted to anyone no matter who.'[1096] Scripture is like the Silenus: 'The more excellent a thing is, the more deeply it is hidden and far removed from uninitiated eyes.'[1097] In the *Paraclesis* and the preface to the *Paraphrase on Matthew* Erasmus had indeed called for a Bible available

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1093 Ep 1500:21–2
1094 Cf *De libero arbitrio* CWE 76 17–20.
1095 CWE 76 219. Cf the Translator's Note to 'Obscure Passages' in 'Errors in the Vulgate' 886.
1096 CWE 76 220 with n675; for the similar affirmation in the *Ratio* see 633 with n747.
1097 *Adagia* III iii 1 CWE 34 267

to all to read, not so that each reader might interpret as he wished under the supposed illumination of the Spirit, but because of the formative power of the word, the potential to purify inherent in its images and in the texture of its language.

### *The Theologians of Louvain*

Erasmus' departure from Louvain in 1521 did not lay to rest the criticism that had arisen there. Indeed, he found it so severe that between 1523 and 1525 he called repeatedly for his critics to be officially silenced, though attempts to do so on the part of two popes and the emperor met with relatively little success.[1098] Virtually the whole Erasmian enterprise was under attack. Pieter de Corte, writing from Louvain in 1525, told Erasmus that his enemies in Louvain 'tried by different methods to tear from our students' hands the *Colloquies*, the *Enchiridion*, and many other works of yours …'[1099] A book published in 1525 under the name of Taxander made the *De esu carnium* and the *Exomologesis* the brunt of a more general attack on Erasmus.[1100] Jacobus Latomus, too, was publishing tracts implicitly critical of Erasmus.[1101] In the midst of this broadly based criticism, Erasmus' New Testament was not forgotten by the Louvain theologians. In April 1525 Erasmus complained in a letter to Noël Béda that Latomus was then 'tearing to shreds what he could have corrected' when Erasmus was preparing the second edition of the New Testament.[1102] In September 1526 he reported that Baechem, 'acting as agent for the dean, publicly burned [his] New Testament at s'Hertogenbosch.'[1103] Erasmus believed that Baechem was behind a pamphlet of 1523 written in Dutch and circulated in manuscript in Louvain, which attacked passages in

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1098 For Adrian see Epp 1359:2–3 (1523) and, recollecting Adrian after his death, 1481:72–6, 1553:45–8 with n5; for Clement, Epp 1589 and 1589A (1525), and 1717:8–21 with n4 (1526); for Charles, Epp 1554:32–9 with n7, 1643:15–17 with n2 (both 1525), and 1731 introduction, 1747:11–30 with introduction and n4 (both 1526).

1099 Ep 1537:28–9. The *Colloquies* had come under attack in Louvain almost as soon as they had found their 'definitive form' in the editions of 1522; cf CWE 39 5 and Ep 1299:59–60.

1100 For the authors represented by the pseudonym 'Taxander,' including Vincentius Theoderici who 'played the leading role' see CWE 71 114–15.

1101 Cf Ep 1674 n12.

1102 Cf Ep 1571:6 and 13–14 with n5.

1103 Ep 1747:43–4. The story is not otherwise authenticated; cf Ep 1747 n10.

Erasmus' New Testament scholarship, especially the *Paraclesis*, the *Pio lectori* prefacing the *Paraphrase on Matthew*, and the *Annotations*.[1104]

Both Baechem and Theoderici died in August 1526. But within less than a year Erasmus learned of a new critic in Louvain, Frans Titelmans, 'a Franciscan who in his public lectures repeatedly casts slurs on my name,' wrote Erasmus.[1105] He was a young man in his mid-twenties, taught by Latomus. He had been 'chosen to instruct his fellow monks, at first … in philosophical subjects, but from 1527 he lectured on Scripture.'[1106] Correspondence between Titelmans and Erasmus began in May 1527 with a provocative letter from Erasmus, answered by an evidently irenic letter from Titelmans.[1107] Titelmans made his case with commendable clarity: the work of men like Valla, Lefèvre, and, most recently, Erasmus had 'tarnished the authority' of the 'old translation' (that is, the Vulgate) of the New Testament. Erasmus had 'scrutinized, annotated, censured, and altered' many things 'with great severity, or rather … with undue liberty.' After investigation, Titelmans had found that Erasmus had in most cases 'merely devised captious criticism,' and that most of Erasmus' allegations could be 'refuted by anyone with even a modest knowledge of the Scriptures and of languages.'[1108]

Titelmans wrote his book in late 1527 or early 1528, at first circulating copies in manuscript. However, by October 1528 he had, in spite of opposition from theologians at Louvain, begun to negotiate its publication in

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1104 The pamphlet's author, 'acting as a mouthpiece' for Baechem (letter to Nicolaas Everaerts, Ep 1469 introduction) was Floris Oem van Wijngaarden, whose son wrote to Erasmus in 1526 requesting him to reply to his father's pamphlet (cf Ep 1668 introduction); for Erasmus reply to the son see Ep 1699. In the letter to Everaerts (26 July 1524) Erasmus reviewed the criticisms the author of the pamphlet had made. One of the criticisms (unidentified in Ep 1469 n23) derived from the preface to Cratander's edition (1520) of the Latin Bible; cf 'Separate Latin Editions' 723 with n17. The author was also critical of the preface to the *Paraphrase on Matthew* (vernacular translations) (Ep 1469:104–26), and Erasmus cites from the letter a passage found in the *Paraclesis* to which the author had taken exception (cf *Paraclesis* 412 with n44).

1105 Ep 1815:30–1 (29 April 1527). In the same letter Erasmus describes in arresting detail the deaths of Theoderici and Baechem; cf ibidem 5–11.

1106 CEBR III 326, where Titelmans appears as a man of genuine faith and devotion. Cf Ep 1823 introduction.

1107 Cf Epp 1823 (Erasmus) and 1837A (Titlemans). Titlemans' letter, as a reply to Erasmus, is conjecturally dated 1527. Cf Ep 1837A introduction.

1108 Cf Ep 1837A:13–29.

Antwerp, which did not occur until May 1529.[1109] Titlemans gave the book a very distinctive form: five main sections in the book represented discussions that took place over five days (hence the *collationes quinque* of its title), each section determined by a sequence of biblical chapters, for example, section 1 Romans 1, section 2 Romans 2–4, etc. Each section offered a *collatio*, a discussion that appeared as a running comparison of the language of the Vulgate with, generally in sequence, the annotations of Valla, Lefèvre, and Erasmus. Between each section Titelmans placed a psalm or canticle, giving the work a touch of piety, a certain devotional cast. An 'Apologetic Prologue' prefaced the work, particularly important because in it Titelmans articulated the theological presuppositions of his work: the gift of the Scriptures in their historic languages – the Hebrew, the Greek Septuagint, the Greek New Testament, and the Latin Vulgate – was an essential part of the economy of salvation; as the truth of God spread, God provided literature in the language of the people. In the succession of Bibles the Latin Vulgate came last of all, given providentially as a means of firmly establishing the Latin church as the guardian of the truth.[1110] Before the end of 1529 Titelmans would receive a response from Erasmus, a response that would at numerous points be carried over into the annotations on Romans in the 1535 edition.

### *The Theologians of Paris*

Among the theologians of Paris probably none appeared to Erasmus more menacing than Noël Béda. There were significant preludes to the controversy between the two that broke out in 1525. Between 1516 and 1520 Béda had shown his hand in three publications directed against Lefèvre and Josse Clichtove, 'formulating the position that the critical and exegetical methods and ideas of the humanists were dangerous to the essential unity of the

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1109 The book was published under the title *Collationes quinque super epistolam ad Romanos* 'Five Discussions on the Epistle to the Romans.' For the progression from manuscript to publication see CEBR III 326 and Epp 1994:74–90 with n14, 2063:59–61, and 2089:2–6. Denis L. Drysdall has effectively made the case for the translation of *collationes* as 'discussions,' but as the word was commonly used in classical literature in the sense of 'comparison,' it is possible that Titelmans intended the ambiguity; cf CWE 73 xxxi with n88.

1110 *Collationes quinque super epistolam ad Romanos* (Antwerp: W. Vorsterman 1529) a2 verso–a4 recto. For Erasmus' response to the *Collationes* see 'New Testament Scholarship' 333–5 and 375–80.

church.'[1111] In August 1523 the faculty of theology passed a general condemnation of Bible versions that included Erasmus' New Testament.[1112] Shortly after the publication of Erasmus' *Paraphrase on Luke* (30 August 1523), a request from Konrad Resch to publish a Paris edition of the *Paraphrase* gave Béda the opportunity to examine it.[1113] Although Francis I, who was inclined towards the humanists, prevented any condemnation of Erasmus, the faculty in November 1523 authorized Béda, 'acting on his own responsibility,' to send to the king's confessor any articles against Erasmus he might have.[1114] Béda made a collection of 'some fifty' passages of questionable orthodoxy he had found in the *Paraphrase on Luke*, and these were passed on to Deloynes, who sometime before his death in July 1524 sent them on to Erasmus.[1115]

Two events in particular seem to have provided the immediate motivation for Erasmus to inaugurate a correspondence with Béda in 1525. Pierre Cousturier (Petrus Sutor), a Carthusian monk, published in early 1525 a book, *De tralatione Bibliae et novarum reprobatione interpretationum*[1116] condemning biblical translations, with an eye particularly on Erasmus. Then to a request from some Carthusian monks for an evaluation of Erasmus' writings Béda responded on 7 April with a very negative opinion.[1117] Erasmus seems to have heard of this almost immediately, and on 28 April wrote to Béda hoping perhaps that he could induce Béda to become a mediator between himself and such traditionalists as Cousturier.[1118] This was not a role Béda was prepared to play. On the contrary, pleading the authority earlier bestowed upon him by the Parlement of Paris, he had continued to examine Erasmus' books, and in May 1525 he told Erasmus that he had 'marked some passages' in the *Paraphrases* on Matthew, John, and the apostolic Epistles.[1119]

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1111 CEBR I 116

1112 CEBR I 117. On a law of 1521 requiring the general approval of the faculty of theology for the publication of books on religion see Ep 1591 n2.

1113 The request made through François Deloynes, a councillor in the Parlement of Paris, sought the approval of the faculty of theology required for the publication of the *Paraphrase*.

1114 Cf Ep 1579 n29.

1115 Cf Ep 1664 n1.

1116 Cf 273 with n1147 below.

1117 Cf Ep 1664 n1.

1118 Cf CWE 11 xv–xvii and CWE 12 xiv–xvi, where Charles Nauert Jr has given a concise account of the relations between Erasmus and Béda in 1525–7.

1119 Cf Ep 1579:139–43. Béda makes no mention of the *Paraphrase on Mark* here, and comments on that *Paraphrase* are absent from Erasmus' *Divinationes ad notata Bedae*, Erasmus' response of 1526. Possibly Béda left Mark untouched at this point out of fear of Francis I, to whom that *Paraphrase* was dedicated.

These, he claimed, were simply passages noted without comment or explanation, and he observed that 'it would be quite pointless to hand these over to you [Erasmus] now.'[1120] By September, however, he was prepared to send the passages, with some comments, to Erasmus.[1121] Early the next year (1526), in a letter to the faculty of theology dated 6 February (Ep 1664), Erasmus attempted to vindicate himself and sent with the letter some brief responses 'to a few points raised.'[1122] In May 1526 Béda had received the permission of the faculty to publish his comments not only on Erasmus' *Paraphrases* but also on Lefèvre's commentaries on the Pauline Epistles and on the Gospels.[1123] To this publication Erasmus responded at once with letters to both the Parlement of Paris (Ep 1721, 14 June) and to Francis (Ep 1722, 16 June), including in the former a copy (evidently printed) of the *Elenchus in censuras Bedae*.[1124] By August Erasmus had prepared and printed two further pieces, the brief *Prologus supputationis*, announcing the *Supputatio* that was to follow later, and the *Divinationes ad notata Bedae* (also called the *Responsiunculae*); these were published bound together with the *Elenchus* and several other pieces.[1125] The *Supputatio*, a fuller, more studied reply, promised in the *Prologus supputationis* of 1526, did not appear until March 1527; a reprint of the texts published the previous year also appeared at the same time and included the *Prologus*, *Divinationes*, and *Elenchus*.[1126]

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1120 Ep 1579:145–51

1121 Ep 1609:54; cf Ep 1664 n1.

1122 Cf Ep 1664:25–9. The self-vindication through such responses anticipates the slightly later *Elenchus in censuras Bedae* and *Divinationes ad notata Bedae*.

1123 Béda's book offered in two parts a critique of the work of both Lefèvre (in two books) and Erasmus (in one book) under the title *Annotationum Natalis Bedae … in Jacobum Fabrum Stapulensem libri duo, et in Desiderium Erasmum Roterodamum liber unus* (Paris: Josse Bade, 28 May 1526). For the preparation and publication of this book see Béda's own account Ep 1685:45–64 and Ep 1721 introduction.

1124 For the *Elenchus in censuras Bedae* as already printed see ASD IX-5 11.

1125 There appears to be some uncertainty about the date of the publication of some of these works; cf Epp 1664 n1, 1721 n14, 1804 n14, and ASD IX-5 11–12. The *Divinationes ad notata Bedae* received its title from the fact that Erasmus had to 'guess at' (Latin *divinare* 'to divine,' 'to guess') the point of Béda's objections, a procedure he noted fairly frequently in the work; cf Ep 1664:25–9 and ASD IX-5 9. For the alternative title, *Responsiunculae*, designating the work as 'little responses,' see ASD IX-5 12.

1126 Cf ASD IX-5 12. The *Elenchus in censuras Bedae* was a list of short rebuttals by Erasmus to some two hundred criticisms Béda had compiled (for *elenchus* see the Translator's Note to 'Errors in the Vulgate' 866); in the *Divinationes ad notata Bedae* Erasmus cited the passages Béda had 'marked' in the *Paraphrases* and followed the citations with a considered reply; the *Supputatio* likewise cited

Underlying Béda's attack was a deep suspicion of the humanist programme of learning that Erasmus had advocated as a propaedeutic to theology: '… you will put us in your debt if … you stand up to those enemies of religion with their show of Greek and their interest in the ancient tongues (you call them "liberal studies")."[1127] Béda linked the emerging Reform with the recent success of humanistic studies; he evidently believed that Erasmus' *Paraphrases* were a product of 'liberal studies,' a belief anyone might well harbour who had read the prefaces to them. Accordingly, Béda pointed to aspects of the Lutheran 'heresy' in the *Paraphrases*, marking in particular such expressions as *sola fides* 'faith alone,' *merita* 'merits,'[1128] *lex* 'law,' *caeremonia* 'ceremonies.'

Beyond objections to such expressions, Béda looked askance at the very notion of paraphrasing. Erasmus cites Béda's little joke about the meaning of the Greek word 'paraphrast,' which 'Latin Professors' understand as referring to one who 'corrupts and perverts' the original.[1129] He also thought that the *Paraphrases* misrepresented Catholic teaching on Christology and original sin.[1130] And he corrected mistakes of fact, challenged some of the classicizing language – terms like *servator* 'saviour,' *fatidicus* 'prophetic,' *fabula* 'story – and found Erasmus' doubts about the authenticity of some of the Epistles unacceptable. Moreover, Erasmus' dedicatory letters raised questions of principle: for example, that Erasmus was making the apostles speak more fully and more clearly than they themselves spoke in Scripture; that Paul's

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the objectionable passages, offering generally a much more elaborate response than the *Divinationes*. Erasmus explained the title *Supputatio* as a 'count' of the 'falsehoods, slanders, and blasphemies' perpetrated by Béda in his criticisms of the *Paraphrases*; cf ASD IX-5 212:15–20.

1127 Ep 1642:64–7

1128 Particularly objectionable was the 'denigration of merits' implied, Béda thought, by the paraphrase on Luke 1:48, where Mary was said to have become the *theotokos* not by her merits but by divine favour. In *1527* the annotation on the verse (*humilitatem ancillae*), previously only a few lines in length, was vastly extended to respond to Béda, 'the very Atlas of a crumbling church, as he supposes himself to be' ASD VI-5 466:524–5.

1129 The Latin word is a transliteration from the Greek. In Greek the *phrastes* was an 'expounder' or 'guide'; the preposition *para* can mean either 'alongside of' or 'contrary to,' the latter obviously being implied by the joke. For the reference see ASD IX-5 386:973–387:978, where Erasmus assumes that Béda borrowed the joke from Pierre Cousturier; cf LB IX 811B–D.

1130 Cf eg ASD IX-5 22:80–24:97 (*Prologus supputationis*), 90:854–92:870 (*Divinationes ad notata Bedae*), and 522:279–92 (*Supputatio*).

Greek was not exactly 'proper' Greek; that the paraphrases could be received either as a commentary, should a 'superstitious' reader not want to think of them as Scripture, or as the very words not of Erasmus but of the apostles, under whose personae the paraphrastic words were spoken.[1131]

Comments such as these clearly reflected a fundamental difference between Béda and Erasmus in their view of Scripture. For Béda the Scriptures inspired by the Holy Spirit could not be written in faulty Greek, nor could they be obscure and in need of clarification. It was, moreover, inappropriate to subject the inspiration of Scripture to the relativism of its readers in the provision that the superstitious could read the *Paraphrases* as commentary, the 'liberated' as virtual Scripture. In response, Erasmus appealed to both fact and theory. On the one hand, it simply was a fact evident to anyone who knows Greek that Paul's Greek was far from 'pure.' On the other hand, Erasmus observed the fundamental theological difference between Béda and him. Whereas Béda could see in Scripture only the divine, Erasmus insisted that Scripture was both divine and human. The human element was to be found in the language that formulated the expression, the divine in the meaning conveyed by the language.[1132] Erasmus goes further to claim for the Spirit an important controlling power, in that the Spirit actually governed the linguistic skills of the apostles for the advantage of the gospel. Paul's style was appropriate to his situation when unsophisticated language rather than persuasive words of wisdom served to reveal the power of God. But propriety depends on time and circumstances, and Erasmus' expression in paraphrase was appropriate to his own times when many were too busy to master the thought of Paul without help and too fastidious to endure the apostle's style.[1133]

Erasmus would not agree that there is no obscurity in Scripture. He called to mind Jerome, who, translating Origen, witnessed to the mysteries of Scripture that were 'touched upon rather than explained' and noted that Paul himself acknowledged hidden wisdom spoken only among the perfect.[1134] In the *Elenchus in censuras Bedae* he had proposed that the Holy Spirit had

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1131 Cf the letters to Domenico Grimani (Ep 710:12–19, 45–53), Silvestro Gigli (Ep 1181:24–32), and Henry VIII (Ep 1381:4–5, 442–50); also *Divinationes ad notata Bedae* ASD IX-5 88:771–92, 142:987–93, 142:20–143:35, and *Supputatio* ibidem 506:941–8. The option 'Erasmian commentary / apostolic words' (in Ep 710:45–53) reflects Jerome; cf *Apologia* 466 with n57.

1132 Cf *Supputatio* ASD IX-5 500:781–9, 502:826–34.

1133 Cf *Supputatio* ASD IX-5 503:857–61.

1134 Cf *Divinationes ad notata Bedae* ASD IX-5 86:755–87:768.

allowed obscurity to remain in Scripture to exercise our industry.[1135] To bring to light the dark places of Scripture is precisely the work of commentators: 'Do they not, by noting idioms, solving difficult problems, arranging in good order the broken syntax, make the author they are explaining speak, as it were, more clearly and copiously? I profess to have undertaken precisely this in my *Paraphrase* … except that the form of the commentary is changed.'[1136]

But the form is not without importance. Béda insisted that Erasmus could not claim that his *Paraphrases* were nothing more than a commentary and at the same time claim that it is not he who speaks but the biblical writer.[1137] Erasmus appealed to the distinction between words and meaning: 'It is enough for me if what I attribute to the persona of Luke in no way contradicts what the evangelist meant.'[1138] Erasmus refused to recognize that the impersonation itself was a problem. The reader brings to the text of a paraphrase an understanding of the enterprise that allows for misinterpretation and mistakes. Take the case of Jerome, who perhaps, speaking in his commentary under the persona of God, says something other than God intended: the authority of God is not endangered, since Jerome's mistake is understood to derive from our human condition, and we pardon it if it does not entail impiety.[1139] Erasmus' response is not entirely convincing. In a commentary a small passage of Scripture paraphrased will not obscure the voice of the commentator; in a 'continuous paraphrase' the voices of the original author and the paraphrast can easily become confused, disguising the paraphrast as commentator and enabling the paraphrast to acquire an authority not available to the commentator.

In fact, throughout the pieces that comprised the 1527 publication Erasmus indicated rather broadly the kind of mentality he wished his readers to bring to his *Paraphrases*. First, they must keep in mind his general aim in writing the *Paraphrases*. He makes no attempt in a *Paraphrase* to discuss knotty questions or to solve age-old puzzles. He has intended rather to give 'a sort of summary knowledge of apostolic teaching so that the reader [of the *Paraphrases*] might approach the reading of Holy Scripture better prepared to learn.'[1140] Moreover, he wants his *Paraphrases* to be read in the broader context

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1135 ASD IX-5 184:473–5; cf Erasmus' response to Luther, 263 with n1096.
1136 *Supputatio* ASD IX-5 503:851–5
1137 Cf *Divinationes ad notata Bedae* ASD IX-5 142:20–143:24.
1138 *Divinationes ad notata Bedae* ASD IX-5 143:27–9
1139 Cf *Divinationes ad notata Bedae* ASD IX-5 143:33–5 (paraphrased).
1140 *Prologus supputationis* ASD IX-5 26:137–9. Erasmus notes that Chrysostom urged the laity to study the Scriptures at home to understand better the sermons preached during the liturgy; cf *Supputatio* ASD IX-5 464:851–465:868, also CWE 45 11 ('Letter to the Pious Reader').

of all his writings; his intent in the *Paraphrases* can be clarified by what he has said elsewhere, not only in his *Annotations* but also in his other writings – he mentions, for example, the *De immensa Dei misericordia*, and the *De libero arbitrio*.[1141] He would also like his readers to bring to the *Paraphrases* a mind appreciative of humanistic modalities: one must be sensitive to the 'voice' of both the narrator and the actors in the story narrated, must recognize tropes, since not all that is written by the paraphrast is simply propositional or strictly factual, inasmuch as the paraphrast will indulge at times in the imaginary and the fictional; and the reader must expect the paraphrast to mingle narrative and allegory, that is, to turn the narrative into a pedagogical example, the representation of an action for the readers to imitate.[1142] If the reader approaches a *Paraphrase* in this way, the paraphrast may be understood, and the reader prepared to engage with Scripture itself.

The quarrel between the two men broke out again with further publications in 1529. Béda attacked Erasmus in his *Apologia adversus clandestinos Lutheranos*, to which Erasmus replied with *Notatiunculae*.[1143] Erasmus' response is impatient; he called Béda's assertions variously 'mere quibbling,' 'simple slander,' 'a mere trifle,' 'nonsense,' 'shit.' There is little in the book to enhance our understanding of Erasmus' New Testament scholarship. On the problem of the persona, Erasmus in frustration observes, 'The wretched man simply does not understand the principle of the persona.'[1144] He justifies the style of his *Paraphrases* as 'appropriate to Christian simplicity.'[1145] And in light of Béda's sneer that Erasmus regarded himself in the top rank of theologians, Erasmus reaffirms an understanding of his work that appears to have remained unchanged from his first endeavours as a New Testament scholar: 'I treat nothing in theology that cannot be treated by a grammarian.'[1146]

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1141 Cf *Prologus supputationis* ASD IX-5 22:51–77, 26:175–27:189, *Divinationes ad notata Bedae* ibidem 73:445–6, 108:233–5, and *Supputatio* ibidem 526:402–527:405.

1142 For tropes see *Divinationes ad notata Bedae* ASD IX-5 96:960–73, 144:70–145:84, *Elenchus in censuras Bedae* ibidem 166:105–7, and *Supputatio* ibidem 526:393–528:428; for the imaginary and fictional, *Divinationes ad notata Bedae* ibidem 94:915–36; for narrative as exemplum, ibidem 72:421–8.

1143 For these publications see Ep 2110 n8 and ASD IX-5 13 with n70. The *Notatiunculae* is also cited as *Responsio ad notulas Bedaicas*, both titles stressing the 'trifling character' of Béda's notes. Béda's book was published in February 1529 (Paris: Josse Bade); Erasmus' book was published by Froben in March 1529. For the circumstances giving rise to Béda's publication cf Ep 2126 n28 and ASD IX-5 13 with n71.

1144 *Notatiunculae* ASD IX-5 610:429–30

1145 *Notatiunculae* ASD IX-5 630:736–40

1146 Cf *Notatiunculae* ASD IX-5 614:496–7.

Pierre Cousturier, prior of the Carthusian house at Preize (near Troyes) from 1523 to 1525, was a devoted friend of Noël Béda. He had published early in 1525 a book with the title *De tralatione Bibliae et novarum reprobatione interpretationum*, a title that transparently promised a 'refutation' (*reprobatio*) of new translations.[1147] The unguarded manner of expression in the prefatory letter set the tone for the rest of the book: 'I have heard that not only *Paraphrases*, that is, "corruptions" (for such is the meaning of the word) have been published by certain theologians, who are really the precursors of the Anti-Christ, but some new translations have also been published through which they have tried to … make a castaway of the Bible commonly used in the churches. This madness I have wanted to attack with new weapons … to destroy utterly these lately come Amalekites.'[1148] Cousturier left no doubt that Erasmus was one of the chief targets; in chapter 17 he pointed directly to the *Ratio*, calling it 'that compendium in which there are as many faults as folios.'[1149]

Erasmus catches the thrust of Cousturier's book fairly well when he summarizes it in his first letter to Béda. Cousturier contended that the Vulgate, even in its sixteenth-century text, was in every word and detail written and preserved under the inspiration and control of the Holy Spirit.[1150] Any attempt to change it was therefore perverse, heretical, and blasphemous. Erasmus' disdainful response to Cousturier's book, *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem*,[1151] though often repetitive of interpretive principles stated elsewhere, does amplify our understanding of his hermeneutical theory in two respects: the authority of Scripture and the obscurity of Scripture. In addition,

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1147 *De tralatione Bibliae et novarum reprobatione interpretationum* (Paris: Pierre Vidoue for Jean Petit 1525)

1148 *De tralatione Bibliae et novarum reprobatione interpretationum* (Paris: Pierre Vidoue for Jean Petit 1525) fol Aii r

1149 *De tralatione Bibliae et novarum reprobatione interpretationum* (Paris: Pierre Vidoue for Jean Petit 1525) fol LIX verso. Erasmus, in the introduction to his reply, the *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem*, cites over thirty derogatory terms Cousturier had applied to his work and added an excerpt from the full title of Cousturier's book: '… a response to the petty arguments … the vain imagination of a theologaster who pretends to be a theologian'; cf LB IX 739D.

1150 Cf Ep 1571:38–45 and LB IX 752B–D where Erasmus describes in some detail his view of Cousturier's position.

1151 Erasmus' disdain is evident in the extended title as cited in the introduction to Ep 1591 (dedicatory letter dated 'c July 1525'): 'Defence Against the Mad Ravings of Pierre Cousturier, at One Time Theologian of the Sorbonne, Currently a Monk of the Carthusian Order.' Elsewhere in his reply he mocked

his response offers valuable insights into his own assessment of his work on the New Testament.

Cousturier believed that the entire structure of the church had been built upon the Vulgate text; hence a single error found in the text would demonstrate the church's fallibility and threaten its very foundation. In response, Erasmus articulated a view that related the authority of Scripture to its function in salvation-history. The authority of Scripture will stand regardless of the mistakes of translator or scribe, for the heavenly Spirit distributes its gifts in such a way that the supports needed for salvation have never failed any age. The Mosaic law with its shadows prepared for the reception of the gospel. The Septuagint, such as it was, moved the gentiles to the same point. The early church did not know or was unsure of certain things that were later explained by the councils.[1152] It is the work of the Holy Spirit so to control the pen of the translator that the foundation of the faith is not shaken.[1153] Erasmus responded to Cousturier's concern for the church by emphasizing the central role the church plays in salvation-history. It is in the church that the truth to which Scripture witnesses resides, and it is because the church has espoused the truth of Scripture as found in Scripture's intent that it is authoritative – not because a version was made at the request of a pope (as Damasus requested Jerome's revision of the Gospels) or because the decisions of synods were based on a particular version. 'It is enough that the truth of Scripture remains in the church, even if no one at all has a codex entirely free from faults.'[1154]

Cousturier raised the question of the obscurity of Scripture in relation to the special gift of the translator. Erasmus cites Cousturier: '… no one can translate Holy Writ unless he has a perfect grasp of all its senses and all its mysteries, and no one can have this knowledge without the special inspiration of the Holy Spirit.'[1155] This, Erasmus asserted, is to acknowledge 'that Scripture is obscure and no one can understand it without the gift of the

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Cousturier's extravagant claims that Jerome had been carried away to the third heaven where he learned all the 'mysteries of Scripture' LB IX 744E–F. The *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* was published in August 1525.

1152 Cf *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 759B–C. Compare this view, which finds its centre in the economy of salvation, with that of Titelmans; cf 266 with n1110 above.

1153 Cf *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 773B.

1154 *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 763C

1155 *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 755B

Spirit.'[1156] While Erasmus agreed that Scripture could be obscure, he turned once again to philology for a solution and justified his own work accordingly: his translation was intended simply as an *explanatio* 'a clarification' of the Vulgate, not as its replacement.[1157] Cousturier had attacked Erasmus' advocacy of the *bonae litterae* 'liberal arts' as formulated in the *Ratio*, claiming that few would understand the Bible translated in Ciceronian style. Erasmus countered, 'If Cicero had translated our sacred books, they would be much more easily understood by all who have even a smattering of Latin, since nothing is clearer than Ciceronian speech.'[1158] It is through the liberal arts that this 'clarifying purity' of speech refines articulation for precise understanding.[1159]

Erasmus recognized that the obscurity of Scripture lay in part in the hidden wisdom of the mysteries, but he insisted that while these mysteries may be inexhaustible, they are not inaccessible. 'So manifold and rich is the vein of Scripture that there will always be something to dig out!'[1160] In the *Ratio* he had implied that the knowledge of the biblical languages provided the *via compendiaria* 'the short way' to grasp the meaning of Scripture. Cousturier called the learning of languages the *via dispendiosa* 'the long and laborious way,' since commentaries could much more effectively open the secrets of Scripture.[1161] Erasmus responded with an exposition of three passages from the Old Testament showing how laborious is Cousturier's method of endless thumbing through commentaries, and how brilliantly the passages yield their sense not only on a literal level but also on an allegorical and moral level when the Hebrew and the Greek (Septuagint) are set against the Vulgate.[1162] Thus the Spirit works through knowledge of the languages and philology not only to remove obscurity but also to give access to the deep

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1156 *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 755C. Cf the manner in which the issue of the obscurity of Scripture arose in the controversy with Luther and Béda, respectively 263–4 and 270–1 above.

1157 *Apologia adversus Perum Sutorem* LB IX 768B–C

1158 *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 783C

1159 Cf LB IX 782D–E.

1160 *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 777C

1161 *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 780E–F; cf *Ratio* 489 with n6. Cousturier had no sympathy with the Collegium Trilingue; see ibidem LB IX 786F–789B, where Erasmus defends the *bonae litterae* with the emotional appeal reminiscent of the *Antibarbari*; also the annotations on Luke 1:4 (*eruditus es veritatem*) and on 1 Thess 2:7 (*sed facti sumus parvuli*); cf 'New Testament Scholarship' n309.

1162 *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 791E–793F

mysteries of Scripture. In the interpretation of Scripture, Spirit and philology are not alternative but complementary instruments.

In the *Apology against Pierre Cousturier* Erasmus found several occasions to reflect on his New Testament scholarship, in progress now for more than a decade. He described – as he remembered or wished to present – the early steps in the conceptualization of his New Testament. 'As I wished to have regard for Greek literature, which had just then begun to flourish, and at the same time to set aflame a zeal for piety in those who were still engrossed in secular literature, I thought I should publish the Greek New Testament along with some annotations. I had decided to add the text of the Vulgate. It was not my intention to add my own translation, but some learned friends prevailed on me, and I followed their advice rather than my own judgment.'[1163] He noted that he had submitted his translation to the judgment of the church and that he had invited corrections.[1164] While he had been forced to acknowledge 'by virtually irrefutable arguments' that the Vulgate text known in the sixteenth century was not the same as Jerome's, he was prepared to recognize its authenticity simply because of its acceptance by almost the entire church.[1165]

Erasmus exploits the authority inherent in ecclesiastical usage by providing a selective list of his textual sources, some of which carried evidence of liturgical use. He lists a printed Vulgate Bible published 'perhaps sixty years ago.' He cites the *codex aureus* in Mechelen, used in the liturgy for the Gospel reading; a Gospel codex in St Bavo's monastery in Ghent; two ancient manuscripts in Basel that showed signs of use in public services; two manuscripts from the library of St Paul's Cathedral, London; a Gospel codex in the

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1163 LB IX 751D. This account of the origin of the New Testament was written in the same period of time as Erasmus' second letter to Béda (15 June 1525), Ep 1581, in which Erasmus also describes the origin of his New Testament. In this letter, too, he affirms that his intention was to place the Vulgate beside the Greek text, but 'learned friends' had 'put pressure' upon him and overridden his objections; cf Ep 1581:142–8 and 'New Testament Scholarship' 27 with n144.

1164 Erasmus cites (LB IX 751D–E) the approval in 1516 given to his New Testament by both Pope Leo and Christoph von Utenheim, bishop of Basel. Cf Ep 446:62–5, where Erasmus observed that the 1516 *Novum instrumentum* was approved by the 'leading theologians, and in particular by … Christopher bishop of Basel, who authorized the publication of the book.' After the publication of the first edition, Erasmus quite frequently invited comments on his New Testament, eg from Budé, from Latimer, from Jan Briart of Ath, 'and two or three other scholars'; cf respectively Epp 441:29–31, 417:7–8, 1225:123–7. Cf also Ep 1581:165–8.

1165 *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 751E–F

library of Johann von Botzheim, which he had seen and whose readings he had inspected in several places; and some very old codices in the library of St Donatian in Bruges.[1166]

A further comment raises a question about Erasmus' conceptualization of his biblical work. Cousturier had disapproved of Erasmus' expressly stated desire to see the Bible translated into the vernacular languages. In response, Erasmus surprisingly qualifies his former bold declarations: 'I have never said that anyone at all should translate the sacred books into the vernacular, nor have I myself ever undertaken such a thing. In fact I frankly confess that it is best that the common people learn through the spoken word, *viva voce*, if a good teacher is available,' and he affirms that he has made his own moderating position clear in the *Pio lectori* that prefaced the *Paraphrase on Matthew*.[1167]

In June 1526 Cousturier published an *Antapologia* against Erasmus' *Apologia*. Erasmus replied with an appendix attached to his August 1526 publication against Béda.[1168] It is of some interest that in his reply Erasmus identifies the source for the definition of 'paraphrast' as a 'perverse interpreter' given by both Cousturier and Béda: the dictionary of the Renaissance scholar Ambrogio Calepino.[1169] Hostile exchanges between Erasmus and Cousturier continued until 1529.[1170]

### *Rome*

By 1524 criticism in Rome was being directed against Erasmus on both theological and philological grounds. As we have seen, López Zúñiga had

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1166 Cf *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 766E–767A. Though we cannot be certain what printed edition of the Vulgate Erasmus used, the Bible published 'perhaps sixty years ago' may be a reference to the first printed edition of the Bible with the *Gloss* (Strasbourg: Adolph Rusch for Anton Koberger 1481); cf ASD IX-2 216:875n. All the manuscripts listed here are named and abundantly cited in the *Annotations*, with the exception of that from St Bavo's monastery. Manuscripts from Botzheim's library would become important textual witnesses in the New Testament of 1527.

1167 Cf LB IX 783E–F. For the *Pio lectori* see CWE 45 7–22, and especially 11–12 and 19 for considerations that, in some measure, qualify the laity's reading of the Bible. See also the correspondence with Johannes Cochlaeus, 'New Testament Scholarship' 346 with n1497.

1168 Cf Epp 1714 n1 and 1721 n14. For Erasmus' August publication see 'New Testament Scholarship' n1125.

1169 Cf *Appendix respondens ad Sutorem* LB IX 811B–C. For Calepino's dictionary see Ep 1725 n3 and CEBR I 244.

1170 Cf Ep 1658 n7.

published in 1520 his *Annotationes contra Erasmum Roterodamum* on Erasmus' translation of the New Testament; in spite of persistent official disapproval, he had managed to publish five further works by 1524, three of them attacking Erasmus as Lutheran, two directed against his New Testament scholarship.[1171] According to a correspondent in Rome sympathetic to Erasmus, López Zúñiga took advantage of social situations to read in public his writings against Erasmus.[1172] In 1524 or 1525 an unpublished document with the title *Racha*, evidently authored by Girolamo Aleandro and attacking Erasmus as a heretic, was circulating in Rome.[1173] There was outspoken criticism also from members of the Roman Academy,[1174] much of it attacking Erasmus' philological 'ineptitude,' but some of it also theological. Erasmus reports that these people criticized the carelessness of his productions and his style, lampooning him as a '*porro* fanatic.'[1175] Among such critics was one whom he had identified by 1525 as Alberto Pio, prince of Carpi. 'People write to tell me that at every meeting and every dinner-party at Rome he belittles me, claiming that I am no philosopher and no theologian, and that I possess no genuine scholarship at all.'[1176]

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1171 López Zúñiga attempted to reveal Erasmus as Lutheran in *Erasmi Roterodami blasphemiae et impietates* (1522), *Libellus precursor* (1522), and *Conclusiones principaliter* (1523). The *Assertio ecclesiasticae translationis Novi Testamenti a soloecismis* (1524) defended the Vulgate, the *Loca quae … Erasmus emendavit* (1524) accused Erasmus of plagiarizing López Zúñiga in his third edition of the New Testament; cf ASD IX-2 22–9 and 41–2. On the *Assertio* see the Translator's Note to 'Solecisms' in 'Errors in the Vulgate' 872–3. For López Zúñiga's 1520 publication see 'New Testament Scholarship' 196 with n759.

1172 Cf Ep 1260:159–90 and 203–17 (describing events in 1521).

1173 Cf Ep 1553:56–60 with n9 (*Racha* composed 1524) and CEBR I 30 (*Racha* composed 1525). For Erasmus' response in the fourth edition of the New Testament see 300 with n1263.

1174 For the Roman Academy (Academies) see Ep 1341A n115 and CWE 84 27 n126.

1175 Cf Ep 1479:22–5 with n10, 124–56, and for '*porro* fanatic' see 139–40. Erasmus' standard of good Latin was derived from the common usage of 'approved authors' extending across all periods of antiquity. Some members of the Roman Academy insisted on only Cicero as the standard for good Latin. The issue led Erasmus in 1528 to write his *Ciceronianus*, which, in effect, justified his own rather loose style. For the significance of '*porro* fanatic' see Ep 1479 n56.

1176 Cf Epp 1576:46–9 and 1634:12–17. For Pio's distinguished family, his exceptional education in languages, philosophy and theology, and his outstanding gifts as a diplomat see CWE 84 xvii–xxxviii, and more briefly Ep 1634 introduction. From 1523 to 1527 Pio was in Rome as French ambassador to the papacy; during the sack of Rome in 1527 he escaped to Paris; cf CWE 84 xvii–xviii and 'New Testament Scholarship' 257 with n1060.

Erasmus decided to confront Pio directly. In a letter to Pio, dated 10 October 1525, Erasmus raised chiefly one major issue: that whenever the cardinals or scholars in Rome meet, Pio repeats the story 'that all our present troubles began with Erasmus.'[1177] Addressing this issue, Erasmus denied that his relationship with Luther was the cause of the present turmoil, and pointed rather to those, especially monks, who had begun 'to connect the supporters of the humanities with the Lutheran affair, hoping in this way to destroy both at the same time.'[1178] In fact, he affirmed, the real cause of the present troubles 'was the blatantly godless lives of some of the clergy, the arrogance of certain theologians, and the tyrannical behaviour of some monks.'[1179]

Pio received Erasmus' letter on 14 November 1525. He did not complete a response until 15 May 1526, partly as a result of his own diffidence, but largely because as ambassador of Francis I to Pope Clement VII he was engaged during these months in forging an alliance against Charles.[1180] When he had completed his response, Pio circulated it in Rome in manuscript form and sent a copy to Erasmus, who received it by early September 1526. Two years later, in December 1528 Erasmus claimed that he had begun a reply immediately but that the sack of Rome had intervened, so that only then, in late 1528, did he learn that Pio was in Paris, about to publish his manuscript.[1181] Erasmus was unsuccessful in an attempt to forestall the publication, and Pio published his *Responsio paraenetica* on 7 January 1529. Erasmus' *Responsio ad epistolam paraeneticam Alberti Pii*, crafted within a few days, was in turn published in March.[1182]

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1177 For this as the central issue rather than Erasmus' deficient learning see the explanation in Ep 1634 n5.

1178 Cf Ep 1634:108–15.

1179 Ep 1634:97–9

1180 Cf CWE 84 xlvii–xlviii. The Holy League of Cognac was formalized on 22 May 1526, just one week after Pio had concluded his response. Clement VII signed on 4 June, joining Francis I, Venice, and Milan in a commitment to eliminate the power of Charles in Italy. This would lead to the sack of Rome in 1527; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 257 with n1058.

1181 Cf Ep 2080:1–11.

1182 For the chronology see CWE 84 xliv–lxvii. Erasmus' reference to Pio in the *Ciceronianus* (1528) CWE 28 420 seems to have been an inducement to Pio to publish; cf CWE 84 lvii–lviii. Pio's *Responsio paraenetica* is translated in CWE 84 as 'Hortatory Letter'; for its title see CWE 84 cxxx–cxxxii. For a brief account of the sequence of events in the exchange between Erasmus and Pio see Ep 1634 introduction.

Erasmus placed the weight of his response on an effort to clear himself of the charges that he was a Lutheran, the cause of the present trouble. But Pio's publication included criticism of Erasmus' New Testament scholarship, most incisively, his project of paraphrasing.[1183] This was a subject Erasmus was prepared to explore, and he responded first by distinguishing 'two types of interpretation, one which transfers a book from one language into another, a second which explains the meaning of Scripture under consideration.'[1184] This is, in effect, to confirm what he had said a moment before, that 'Sacred Scripture consists above all of its mystic meaning rather than of words … and it is situated in the languages in which it was handed down by its original writers.'[1185] Like others, Pio believed that the words of Scripture were precisely those given by the Holy Spirit; improvement upon the work of the Holy Spirit was impossible: '… the divine Spirit uttered the mysteries of his Wisdom with the words he approved, and in the order and style that were most suitable.'[1186] If Pio's presuppositions excluded Erasmus' conceptualization of his work on the New Testament editions and the belief that more polished language would attract educated readers, it more emphatically excluded his project for paraphrasing Scripture as well. Pio had found the speech of Christ in the *Paraphrases* unsuitably cultivated. Erasmus demurred: he had had no time to place 'studied and artificial' speech in the mouths of his paraphrastic characters. 'Nowhere do I assign to Christ speech that is studied and highly wrought, since there is no work of mine that I completed more extempore.'[1187] In the case of his New Testament translation, however, Erasmus clung to a long-held conviction: '… you will allow, in fairness, that those who love the spiritual beauty of God's house with their whole hearts may sometimes give a brief indication of what they long for.'[1188] To

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1183 For a summary of Pio's *Responsio paraenetica* see CWE 84 xlvii–lvi. Cf also the substantial citations from Pio's book in the footnotes in CWE 84.

1184 'Two types of interpretation': *duplex interpretandi genus*, *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* LB IX 1114F / CWE 84 75. Erasmus plays on the ambiguity of the Latin verb *interpretari* meaning both 'to translate' and 'to explain' or 'interpret.'

1185 *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* CWE 84 74

1186 Cf *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* CWE 84 76 n375.

1187 Cf *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* CWE 84 80. Erasmus generally claims a 'middle style' for his *Paraphrases*, but there can be little doubt that he applied his rhetorical knowledge and skill in paraphrasing some of the speeches of the biblical characters; some speeches certainly reflect the artistic refinement of classical models.

1188 *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* CWE 84 48

read the Bible in language more polished than that of the Vulgate remained a legitimate desire.

In the prefatory essays to his New Testament Erasmus had spoken eloquently of the transforming power of Scripture, while in both his *Paraphrases* and *Annotations* he had portrayed the Scriptures as revealing the primitive standard for Christian life, both individual and communal, against which the church could measure itself. Scripture functioned not only to refresh the individual but to restore the church. Erasmus reaffirms the latter principle when faced on the one hand with his apparent sympathy for some of Luther's reforms and faced on the other with Pio's strong conviction of the legitimacy of development in the church's doctrine and practice.[1189] 'I ask you, what use are the Scriptures if we are not to be allowed through them to recall an almost wholly degenerate piety back to its original model?'[1190] Erasmus clarifies: he has no intention of recalling 'the rites of the church to [its] infancy … But there is nothing better for Christians than to be always in the state of becoming childlike again and always striving after their original sincerity.'[1191] This is in effect to say that the church must be measured by the philosophy of Christ, a philosophy found in the wisdom of the Scriptures.

### *The Spanish Monks*

Sometime in or before the summer of 1526, Alonso Fernández de Madrid had published a Spanish translation of the *Enchiridion*.[1192] Its popularity justified a second edition shortly thereafter but also added to a current of hostility directed towards Erasmus that was fostered by the monks.[1193] In the spring of 1527, monks from various orders took concerted action. In response to

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1189 Cf *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* CWE 84 lxxxiii and 55.

1190 *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* CWE 84 35; cf ibidem 30: 'Why, indeed, are the divine Scriptures pondered except that they rail against the evil ways of all men?'

1191 *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* CWE 84 55

1192 As no copies of the first edition have survived, the date of the publication is unknown; cf Ep 1742 nn4, 7, 8.

1193 Cf Ep 1742 with introduction for an interesting account of the reception in Spain of Erasmus' publications. In this letter (1 September 1526) the Spaniard Juan Maldonado speaks of the monks as the 'scourges of Erasmus' (Ep 1742:146) but notes that scholastic theologians also 'detest' him (Ep 1742:57 with n2; cf the 'Erasmus floggers' of Ep 1814:88), while humanists support him, and women are avid readers of his work, Ep 1742:24–52 and 162–80. For opposition in Spain see the *Contra morosos* paragraph 110b n296.

their complaints, Alonso Manrique de Lara, archbishop of Seville and inquisitor-general, had, about the first of March, invited the heads of the principal orders to present to him on 28 March objectionable statements that they collected from Erasmus' works. When on 28 March duplications were found in their lists, he asked the monks to combine their lists into a single list. Having soon received the new list arranged under 'articles,'[1194] on 12 April he promised to call a meeting of theologians in Valladolid. The assembly met in the palace of the inquisitor-general on 27 June, remaining in session until 13 August, when it dispersed on account of an epidemic of the plague. As the assembly was never reconvened, no official judgment of the assembled theologians was ever given.[1195]

Although the criticism of the monks ranged widely over the works of Erasmus, his New Testament scholarship was close to the centre of their concern. In objecting to Erasmus' expression of the historic doctrine of the Trinity, they exposed his attempt to defend his omission of the Johannine comma in the first two editions of the New Testament. He had, indeed, included the comma in the third edition, but had extended the annotation on it to criticize the 'over-curious investigation' of the fine points of Trinitarian theology and asserted that the orthodox doctrine could be demonstrated only by 'ratiocination.' In the fourth edition of the New Testament (March 1527) he added still further to his comments on the comma and now (1528) replied to the monks with essentially the same arguments he had formulated in the recently published edition.

Erasmus argued that what is fundamentally at stake is the integrity of the text of Scripture. The integrity of the biblical text is established by the evidence of witnesses, for which the Fathers, above all the Greeks, are of central importance, and Erasmus marshalls a host of such witnesses.[1196] But conjecture also has a role to play in establishing the text of Scripture. We may, for example, legitimately conjecture that so many Fathers distinguished for their orthodoxy would not have allowed the Arians to remove the comma if it had been part of the text; from the silence of their commentaries we must infer that they had no knowledge of the comma and that it was therefore a later addition

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1194 The precise number of articles seems uncertain; cf Ep 1791 n1. But for 'twenty' see the reference cited in the note.

1195 The sequence of events that occurred before the theologians met is described in detail in a letter to Erasmus from Juan de Vergara dated 24 April 1527 (Ep 1814:115–350); cf also Ep 1786 n5. For the date of the meeting at Valladolid see Ep 1814 n37.

1196 Cf *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1030C–1031B, 1032A.

to the biblical text. Erasmus turns finally to the authority of Scripture and the church. So great is the authority of Scripture that if only a single passage in all of Scripture unmistakably demonstrates the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, nothing further is needed. At the same time, in the interpretation of Scripture the authority of the church supersedes every other consideration.[1197]

Erasmus recognized that the term *homoousios*, central to Nicene Trinitarianism, was not a scriptural term but represented a concept derived through logical deduction from Scripture, that is, through ratiocination. How, the monks wondered, is ratiocination different from the 'curious investigation' Erasmus condemned? Erasmus distinguished between debates over the 'curious and contentious questions' that not even angels can answer, questions that do not contribute to piety – the typical questions debated in the schools[1198] – and the kind of deduction from a biblical statement that can lead to piety. Thus, when the Scripture affirms that the Son is begotten of the Father, since God by definition is undivided, the Son must be 'of the same substance.' This is ratiocination, the use of logic starting from a premise given in Scripture leading to a conclusion recognized as orthodox. Even so, this is not to deny that some 'ratiocination' is neither effective nor legitimate.[1199] Moreover, Erasmus expresses his preference for scriptural language in theological discussion. It is best in theological discourse to follow as a rule the 'custom of the Holy Scriptures' (*consuetudo sacrarum scripturarum*), where generally the term 'God' is applied to the Father, not the Son.[1200] To follow

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1197 Cf *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1031A–B. For an analogous argument directed against critics of Erasmus' reading of John 7:39 ('for as yet there was no Spirit' NRSV) see the letter to Robert Aldridge (23 August 1527), Ep 1858:3–306, a letter written only days before Erasmus' letters to Manrique, Epp 1864 and 1877, the latter of which is 'a partial first draft' of the *Apologia adversus monachos*; cf Ep 1877 introduction. Erasmus added the comma in the third edition of the *Novum Testamentum*; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 200 with n781.

1198 Cf *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1033D–F, where Erasmus describes scholastic argumentation as 'puny little men who rely on human philosophy breaking into the shrine [of the mysteries],' then gives a list of 'vain questions' similar to the list in the annotation on 1 Tim 1:6 (*in vaniloquium*).

1199 Cf *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1034F, and for the entire argument 1033A–1036F.

1200 Cf *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1037B–F and 1040B. Erasmus repeats here a point frequently made in his annotations, that the word 'God' in Scripture is usually applied to the Father, 'Lord' to the Son; cf eg the annotations on Rom 5:9 ('who is above all things God') 1535 and 1527, CWE 56 242–6 (1535) and 249–51 (1527) with n15.

this rule is to follow the early Fathers, who, through their deep veneration of the Holy Scriptures, hesitated to move outside or beyond its language.[1201]

In one of their articles the monks accused Erasmus of derogating from the authority of Scripture inasmuch as he had admitted the possibility of memory lapses on the part of the evangelists, particularly in his annotation on Matthew 2:6 (*et tu Bethlehem*). This challenge to the presuppositions of his philological method was by no means new,[1202] and Erasmus responded to the monks in 1528 with essentially the same line of argument he had taken in his annotation of *1519*. To refuse to admit errors in Scripture or to insist that the apostles and evangelists never erred is to turn a blind eye to the facts. The authority of Scripture does not depend on its absolute inerrancy; it lies rather in the truth of its saving message. The Holy Spirit used fallible men to write the Scriptures but so guided their pens that all that is necessary for salvation is securely recorded there. In the response to the monks the role of the Holy Spirit is stated perhaps more boldly than in the annotation on Matthew: the Holy Spirit by artful design directed the evangelists to differ in their narratives, for the very disagreement is a stimulus to faith. When the Holy Spirit controls remembrance and forgetfulness in the saintly authors, forgetfulness is as useful as remembrance.[1203]

In his paraphrase on Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43 Erasmus had interpreted the parable of the tares and the wheat in a manner that invited a reference to the treatment of heretics by the contemporary Inquisition, for the paraphrase had suggested that false apostles, impious bishops, and heretics were not to be removed by the sword but were to be tolerated in the hope that they might repent.[1204] This was understood as 'removing the sword from the prince.' Béda had already objected to Erasmus' interpretation of the parable and had elicited a response from Erasmus.[1205] In his response to the monks, however, Erasmus offered a much more firmly structured argument and made a much more elaborate attempt to set his own interpretation in the context of the history both of the church's practice and of the interpretation of the parable. In the end, Erasmus gives us his own interpretation: 'This parable refers only

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1201 Cf *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1037B–D and 1040F–1041E.

1202 Cf Ep 769:43–68 (Eck) and *Responsio ad annotationes Lei* 3 (Note 1) (Lee) CWE 72 349–50.

1203 Cf *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1072A and 1073A–B. For Erasmus' full response to this article see LB IX 1070C–1080E.

1204 Cf CWE 45 212–15.

1205 Cf *Divinationes ad notata Bedae* ASD IX-5 79:585–80:609 and 350:130–358:302, and *Supputatio* ASD IX-5 350:130–302.

to apostolic men whose responsibility it is to protect the bride of Christ by the sword of the Spirit, by prayers, tears, a pure life, blood, not by swords and slaughter … Thus I do not take away anything from princes from whom the Lord did not take away the sword since they were idolaters … nor do I snatch from apostles and theologians ecclesiastical power.'[1206] In the annotation on these verses Erasmus made no attempt either in *1527* or *1535* to defend his paraphrastic interpretation. Accordingly, the response to the monks has special value.

Erasmus' response to the monks had an important sequel that should not go unnoticed in the story of the New Testament scholarship. In 1529 Gerard Geldenhouwer, once a friend of Erasmus who had, however, become a Reformer, published 'no fewer than three pamphlets featuring an excerpt from the *Apologia adversus monachos* … in which Erasmus had argued … for clemency in [the] treatment of heretics.' Geldenhouwer hoped thus 'to bolster with the authority of Erasmus' a position he himself held.[1207] It was apparently also his intention to connect Erasmus' name with the Reformation. Profoundly disturbed, Erasmus wrote his vitriolic *Epistola contra pseudevangelicos* (1529).[1208] To this Martin Bucer, leader of the Reform in Strasbourg, replied (1530), evoking yet another response from Erasmus, the *Epistola ad fratres Inferioris Germaniae*.

**Moments of Encouragement: Letters of Appreciation**

In the letter to Robert Aldridge Erasmus had expressed his frustration at the criticism levelled against him from all sides by 'monsters of wickedness.'[1209] However, the reaction to Erasmus' New Testament scholarship in this period was by no means all negative. In May 1528 Hector Boece in Aberdeen, Scotland was able to report that a Dane, Hans Bogbinder, had been overjoyed to find 'in the farthest corners of the world devoted admirers of [Erasmus] engaged in the study of literature' and saw 'scholars of sacred learning with [Erasmus'] *Paraphrases* … always in their hands.'[1210] In July of the same year,

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1206 *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1059D–E

1207 Cf Ep 2219:10–14 with n4.

1208 Cf CEBR II 84 and the introduction by Laurel Carrington to this work, *Epistola contra pseudevangelicos* CWE 78 208–17. Carrington notes that well before the *Apologia adversus monachos* appeared Erasmus had stated his position in his responses to the criticism of Latomus and Béda; cf CWE 78 211–15.

1209 Cf Ep 1858:393–400; for the context of this letter see n1197 above.

1210 Ep 1996:5–8

Johann Henckel, chaplain to Queen Mary of Hungary, widow of Louis II, wrote to Erasmus that the queen 'consoles her widowhood with holy reading … Your *Paraphrases*, which are her favourite reading, she read previously in German translation, but now she reads them in Latin, just as you wrote them, and turns them over and over again in her mind and absorbs their meaning. She is so singularly devoted to you … that she could not be more devoted.'[1211] But no appreciation of the *Paraphrases* is more striking than that of Conradus Pellicanus. Once a good friend, Erasmus had, as we have seen, turned against Pellicanus in 1525 when he had come to believe that the Sacramentarians were using his *Paraphrases* to demonstrate his sympathy with their cause. Pellicanus denied vehemently that the *Paraphrases* supported the Sacramentarians, and, in spite of Erasmus' hostility to him, added words of the highest praise: 'Everything which I or any good Christian needs to know about the holy mystery of the sacrament will be found in the account which you have given in all your *Paraphrases*, based on the works of the holy Doctors of the church and presented with great and ample learning and careful scholarship. When I read these works, I often kissed the book and expressed my enthusiastic approval; if the defence of the truth which they contain should ever bring you into danger (which God forbid), I should want to share that danger with you, even if it meant death itself.'[1212]

## X THE FOURTH EDITION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT (1524–7)

### Chronology[1213]

It is possible that Erasmus began to think of a fourth edition of his New Testament as early as the autumn of 1522, when he visited Johann von Botzheim, a resident canon of the cathedral chapter of Constance. Through Botzheim he was given access to a Gospel manuscript in the chapter's library. He took

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1211 Ep 2011:33–41. Henckel's fine praise came with the suggestion that Erasmus honour Mary with a book, which Erasmus duly provided, the *De vidua christiana* CWE 66.

1212 Ep 1638:35–42. For the larger context of this remark see Ep 1637 introduction and 'New Testament Scholarship' 260 with n1075; and for the deathbed reconciliation of Erasmus with Pellicanus see 'New Testament Scholarship' 322 with n1364.

1213 For the political and ecclesiastical context see 'New Testament Scholarship' 256–61.

advantage of the opportunity to 'inspect some passages' and found that they agreed with his own revision.[1214] In the correspondence, however, Erasmus himself speaks of a fourth edition first in February 1524, writing to Cardinal Campeggi: 'At this moment a fourth edition of my New Testament is in preparation.'[1215] By September of that year, in an addition to the *Catalogus* published originally in 1523 he speaks as though he had virtually completed the edition: 'But I have a fourth [edition] ready, having discovered while writing the paraphrases many things that had previously escaped me.'[1216] In the following spring (1525), when Erasmus inaugurated correspondence with Noël Béda, he invited Béda to point out anything in the previous editions that might offend, since he was 'now preparing ' a fourth edition.[1217] Erasmus' letters show that by mid-May he had undertaken a very serious search for manuscripts of Chrysostom. Although by this time Erasmus had become keenly interested in publishing editions of Chrysostom 'the golden mouth,'[1218] we may assume that the new urgency to find Chrysostom manuscripts was at least partially stimulated by his intention to complete the fourth edition of his New Testament. Having acquired pieces of Chrysostom's *Homilies on Acts* first for his response to Lee, he had then introduced them into the third edition of his New Testament; any new edition would profit greatly from the

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1214 Erasmus reports this 'collation' of texts in his *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* (1525) LB IX 766F–767A, likewise in a *1527* addition to the annotation on John 21:22 (*sic eum volo manere*) ASD VI-6 170:165–8. The visit took place in September 1522 (cf Ep 1316 introduction). That he attempted a full collation of texts at this point is unlikely, since he was sick much of the time (Ep 1316:12). For the elaborate description of the visit see Ep 1342:369–500, where, surprisingly, the library is not mentioned.

1215 Ep 1415:95–6 (c 8 February 1524)

1216 Ep 1341A:493–5

1217 Cf Ep 1571:20–6 (28 April). On 15 June, in his second letter to Béda, Erasmus repeated the offer inasmuch as his fourth edition was now 'in preparation'; cf Ep 1581:330–1.

1218 As early as 1523 Erasmus had suggested to the Aldine Press the publication of Chrysostom in Greek (Ep 1349:21–3). In 1524 Erasmus' friend Levinus Ammonius urged him to undertake 'something of Chrysostom' (Ep 1463:159–66). In early 1525 Erasmus published with Froben editions of Chrysostom's *De orando Deum* (April, Ep 1563) and the *De sacerdotio* (May, Ep 1558); in February 1526 the series continued with *De fato et providentia Dei* (Ep 1661 introduction), and in August of the same year with some *Homilies* on the Epistle to the Philippians (Ep 1734 introduction). Almost contemporaneous with the publication of the fourth edition of his New Testament, Erasmus published several works of Chrysostom under the title *Chrysostomi lucubrationes* (March; cf Ep 1800:112–18 with n21 and Ep 1801).

witness of the complete *Homilies* on that book and from whatever further manuscripts of Chrysostom could be found.[1219]

Thus, in mid-May of 1525 Erasmus sent Karl Harst to Italy on a mission with several objectives, including the acquisition of a manuscript in Padua of Chrysostom's *Homilies on Acts*. Harst returned from Italy in September without the manuscript, and Erasmus promptly sent him back to Italy to obtain it.[1220] Harst had returned to Basel by mid-December 1525 with the *Homilies on Acts* in hand.[1221] In May 1526 Erasmus sent to Italy Hieronymus Froben, son of the publisher, 'a nice unassuming young man … prepared to purchase, beg, borrow, or steal' manuscripts.[1222] Froben had little success in Padua but went on to Venice.[1223] His search seems to have been productive: in late August 1526 Erasmus claims that, in addition to the *Homilies on Acts*, he had by then acquired manuscripts of Chrysostom's homilies on Romans, on 2 Corinthians, a manuscript also of two homilies on Philippians, all of these in Greek, and in addition Hebrews in Latin; further, the homilies *Against the Jews* and twelve others 'that no one has touched.'[1224] These acquisitions would play a very significant role in the annotations of the fourth edition. Later, in a letter to Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples, dated March 1527, Erasmus adds to the list the homilies on 1 Corinthians and Galatians. These, however, may have arrived too late to be used for the fourth edition; in the *1527* additions to the annotations on 1 Corinthians, Chrysostom is cited only in the annotations on 1 Corinthians 11, where Erasmus is apparently following the translation of Girolamo Donato,[1225] while references to Chrysostom's *Homilies on Galatians* appear first in *1535*, not in *1527*.

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1219 For Erasmus' witness to the value of Chrysostom in the preparation of the New Testament of 1527 see Ep 1789 'To the Pious Reader' in 'Prefaces and Letters' 779–80 with n1 (the 'preface to fifty-six pages of supplementary material'). For the *Homilies on Acts* in the third edition see 'New Testament Scholarship' 193 with n750.

1220 Cf CEBR II 165; also Epp 1594:11–37, 1623:11–12, 1624:4–9.

1221 The return of Karl by mid-December is inferred from Ep 1654:2–3 (cf n1). For the Chrysostom manuscript see Epp 1675:9–10 with n4 and 1795:2–5.

1222 Cf Epp 1705:8–10 and 1707:16–21.

1223 Cf Ep 1720:8–17.

1224 Cf Ep 1736:26–35 with n9.

1225 For the first edition Erasmus had at hand the *Homilies on 1 Corinthians* available in the Dominican library in Basel; cf the annotations on 1 Cor 1:2 (*ipsorum*) and 1 Cor 15:51 (*omnes quidem resurgemus*). He offers no explanation for its apparent absence from the references in the annotations of 1527. For Girolamo Donato see CEBR I 397.

The letters attest that Erasmus was engaged in sustained work on the fourth edition in late August 1526. On 27 August he was looking forward to 'finishing' the *Annotations*, which was, he said, 'the treadmill round which I go at present again and again.'[1226] He was, however, still searching for manuscripts to add to the textual witnesses he could bring to this new edition. In September he wrote to Ferry de Carondelet, his host in 1524 at Besançon, asking for biblical manuscripts: 'Froben has begun another edition of my New Testament. If your library contains any old manuscripts, especially of the Gospels and apostolic letters, please send them and you will make me very grateful.[1227] This could suggest that at this time printing had either begun or was definitively planned.[1228] About the same time or shortly after, he had, apparently, consulted Botzheim in Constance hoping to borrow from the cathedral library certain biblical codices, of which he had acquired some knowledge when he had visited the canon there in September 1522. In a letter dated 22 October 1526 Botzheim wrote to say that he was sending the two (Latin) manuscripts of the apostolic Epistles. Although he apparently he did not send any Gospel codices at this time,[1229] he must have sent one later and in time for the final preparation of the edition, as the numerous allusions to and citations from it suggest and as seems implied in Erasmus' comment in the annotation on Matthew 15:9 (*doctrinas et mandata hominum*), where he says he found his reading attested 'in the copy from Constance that was *ad manum* ['at hand'] when I was preparing this fourth edition.' It is possible that Botzheim sent yet another Gospel codex that arrived, however, too late for use in the fourth edition.[1230] In late December 1526 Erasmus once again sent Hieronymus Froben in search of manuscripts, this time to the Dalberg

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1226 Ep 1736:16–17

1227 Ep 1749:12–14 (7 September 1526)

1228 Cf Ep 1744:146–8 (c 2 September 1526), where Erasmus speaks of the New Testament as already 'reprinted'; Erasmus may be referring to the text volume or may perhaps be speaking proleptically.

1229 Cf Ep 1761:10–16. Botzheim speaks only of the Epistles, and these lines invite the inference that he did not send any Gospel manuscripts at this time.

1230 Cf Ep 1858:89–92 (23 August 1527), where Erasmus speaks of recently coming upon 'two codices from the cathedral library of Constance.' That one remained at Constance during the preparation of the fourth edition seems evident from the *1527* addition to the annotation on John 21:22 (*sic eum volo manere*), where Erasmus says that a Gospel codex is kept at Constance because of its incredible antiquity, and Botzheim had given him an opportunity to see it. It may be this codex to which Erasmus refers in the 1535 addition to the annotation on John 7:39 (*nondum erat spiritus datus*). Cf Ep 1761 n4.

library in Ladenburg, Germany, but Froben apparently found nothing useful for the New Testament scholarship.[1231] The printing of the *Annotations* was completed in February 1527; but the reconfiguration of the volumes left considerable material to follow the *Annotations*, and the printing of the entire edition was not completed until early March.[1232]

## The New Testament of 1527

### *One of Many Endeavours*

Our perspective on Erasmus' achievement in the publication of the fourth edition of the New Testament in March 1527 can be sharpened by a review of his other literary endeavours during the period when he was preparing this edition, for he continued to publish work in his customary genres. In July 1524 a revised edition of Jerome began to appear, then a new edition of the *Colloquies* with new dialogues added; in September Erasmus took his stand against Luther with the *De libero arbitrio*, and in September / October he published two works of religious instruction, the *De immensa Dei misericordia* and the *Modus orandi Deum*. Early in 1525 he published an edition of Pliny's *Naturalis historia* (with Beatus Rhenanus); in February came his *In psalmum 4* (*Sermon on Psalm 4*); in April / May editions of two works of Chrysostom, the *De orando Deum* and the *De sacerdotio*; and in May an edition of the Greek text (with Latin translation) of two essays of Plutarch. August saw the publication of his long work on 'The Tongue'[1233] and his defence against the attack of Cousturier on Bible translations. In 1526, both February and May were capital months for publications issued. In February a new edition of the *Colloquies* appeared, with some highly controversial dialogues,[1234] and a new expanded edition of the *Adagia*. The edition of Jerome was completed with the publication of volume 9. A translation of the pagan Plutarch's *De vitiosa verecundia* was matched by the publication of the Greek text of the Christian Chrysostom's *De fato et providentia Dei*; and Luther's *De servio arbitrio*

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1231 The library was left to the diocese of Worms by Johann von Dalberg (1455–1503). Froben did return with a manuscript used in the edition of Ptolemy's *De geographia* (Basel: Froben and Episcopius 1533). Cf Epp 1767 introduction and 1774 introduction with n1, both dated December 1526.

1232 Cf Ep 1789 introduction and the Translator's Note introducing the letter in 'Prefaces and Letters' 779. For the reconfiguration see 291–3 just below.

1233 Cf *Lingua* CWE 29, where the translation of the work extends from 262–412.

1234 'A Pilgrimage for Religion's Sake,' 'A Fish Diet,' 'The Funeral'; cf CWE 40 619–795.

was answered by Erasmus' first book of the *Hyperaspistes*. In May a translation of three treatises of Galen was published, and in June another edition of the *Colloquies* with Erasmus' essay on 'The Usefulness of the *Colloquies*.' In the same month Erasmus exposed what he regarded as the falsehoods of the Sacramentarians in his *Detectio praestigiarum.* In August he offered his readers the Greek text with a Latin translation of 'Two Homilies of Chrysostom' (on Philippians) and published an edition of Irenaeus. It was in this month also that he made a comprehensive published response to Noël Béda with the *Prologus supputationis*, *Elenchus in censuras Bedae*, and *Divinationes ad notata Bedae*.[1235] By August he had also completed and published his work on matrimony dedicated to Catherine of Aragon, which she would have received shortly after Henry had announced to her his intention to seek a divorce.[1236] In March 1527, the month in which the fourth edition of the New Testament was published, Erasmus published three other works: a translation of several works of Chrysostom, including 'a few of the homilies' on Acts; a translation of some pieces by Athanasius;[1237] and the *Supputatio*, that immense response to Béda. This remarkable list of publications reflecting the impressive range of Erasmus' intellectual activity – his compulsive determination to respond to critics, his growing commitment to the preparation of editions of the patristic writings, his labours in the composition of works of piety and religious devotion, and his continuing attraction to humanistic endeavours – suggests that while the preparation of the new edition of the New Testament was by no means a parergon, it may, nevertheless, not have claimed the primary position of centre stage among all his literary activities.

### *The Book: Reconfigurations*

The fourth edition was, like its two immediate predecessors, a two-volume publication. The first of the two volumes was, however, quite transformed by the addition of the Vulgate text. This addition necessitated three columns of text on each page: the Greek on the left, the Vulgate on the right, and Erasmus' translation in the middle between the two. To accommodate the

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1235 On the somewhat problematic dating of the publication of these works see 'New Testament Scholarship' 268 with n1125.

1236 Cf Ep 1727 introduction. The *Institutio christiani matrimonii* was a major work, like *Lingua* published the previous year. In CWE 69 the translation of the *Institutio* extends from 215 to 438.

1237 The Chrysostom translations appeared in *Chrysostomi lucubrationes*; cf n1218 above and Ep 1801:11–12 (the citation). For the translations of Athanasius see the 'Letter to the Pious Reader' in 'Prefaces and Letters' 779 with n2.

three columns the Greek print was crowded and the Vulgate column made narrow, inviting the eye to turn to Erasmus' translation where the column was broader and the print larger. The top of each column clearly distinguished the two Latin translations by the designations *ERASMI VERSIO* and *VULGATA EDITIO* on the first page of each biblical book, thereafter simply *ERASMUS* and *VULG. EDITIO*.[1238] The decorative elements of the two previous editions were drastically reduced; in particular, the handsome borders were omitted, even in the prefaces.[1239] Significant changes were made in the pattern of the prefatory material: the title page consisted of a letter from Johann Froben 'To the Candid Reader,' alerting the reader to the special features of the fourth edition and adding a gentle boast that in this edition 'Froben has been outdone by Froben.' Below the letter was the printer's mark of the Froben Press, a pair of couplets, and the date, features that would be carried over in the *1535* title page.[1240] The letters from Leo to Erasmus and Erasmus to Leo retained their place. For the first time the *Paraclesis* was omitted, and the lists of 'Errors in the Vulgate,' that is, the 'Indexes,' were removed from the prefaces and placed at the end of the second volume. The *Apologia* and the *Contra morosos* thus directly followed the prefatory letters; then came the Eusebian canon and chapter titles in Greek and Latin, as in previous editions beginning in *1519*. Within the text two new prefaces were added: Erasmus' *Peregrinatio apostolorum Petri et Pauli cum ratione temporum* 'The Travels of the Apostles Peter and Paul with a Chronology' preceded the text of Acts,[1241] and Chrysostom's prologue (in Greek) to the Pauline Epistles preceded the text of Romans.[1242]

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1238 On the first page of Matthew the designation is slightly expanded: *DES. ERAS. ROT. VERSIO*; on pages 2, 3, and 5 the centre column has *MATTHAEUS* instead of *ERASMUS* – no doubt by mistake.

1239 Exceptionally for this edition, a narrow, non-narrative border on the upper and side margins framed only Erasmus' letter to Leo. The pages of the *1527* text were generally more crowded than those of *1522*: in *1527* the 'Erasmus' column extended normally to fifty-two lines; in *1522* the Latin column was normally forty-one lines. Consequently, in spite of the additional column, in *1527* the text was completed in 544 pages, compared to the 562 pages of *1522*.

1240 The translation of the title page is printed in 'Title Page of the *Novum Testamentum* 1527' 750. For the 'Printer's Device,' which had appeared on the title page of the first edition, see ibidem 745 with n6.

1241 The *Peregrinatio apostolorum* appeared first in the *Tomus primus* of the 1524 *Paraphrases*; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 252 with n1034.

1242 A reflection presumably of the recent availability of Chrysostom's *Homilies on Romans*; cf 288 above.

The additions to the *Annotations* extended the second volume to 710 pages[1243] without the end matter. Although the title page of the *Annotations* had no border, the first page of the preface and first page of the *Annotations* received borders as in previous editions. As in the edition of 1522, so now in that of 1527 each annotation had, as a general rule though not quite always, its own paragraph. The end matter in this volume was by no means insignificant. The annotations were followed by the brief but important letter from Erasmus 'To the Pious Reader' (Ep 1789),[1244] then by two appendices, both of which discussed exegetical problems: the first and longest, the discrepancy between the synoptic Gospels and John in the account of Peter's denial; the second, the weight of evidence that the biblical text of John 7:1 had been changed to accommodate doctrine. They were evidently 'afterthoughts,' composed too late to be added to the annotations in their proper place. Both appeared virtually verbatim in the annotations of *1535*. Following these appendices Erasmus placed the lists of 'Errors in the Vulgate,' changed from their previous prefatory position – perhaps because they seemed less conspicuous, less urgent at the end of the *Annotations*, perhaps because as 'Indexes' keyed to the annotations the reader would find referencing more convenient when both were in the same volume, though the new arrangement interrupted the close relation the indexes had with the *Contra morosos*. There was, finally, an extensive subject index of forty-three pages or eighty-six columns.[1245]

### *Volume I: The Prefaces: The* Apologia *and the* Contra morosos[1246]

Since the edition of 1522 was published, new critics had emerged, old criticisms had been reiterated; in the edition of 1527, therefore, Erasmus attempted through additions in two prefatory pieces, the *Apologia* and the

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1243 From 629 pages in *1522*

1244 Cf n1232 above. The letter is important as a restatement of the principle of criticism that Latin translations of Greek commentaries had erred in so far as they converted the biblical citations of the Greek exegetes to the Latin Vulgate; see 'Prefaces and Letters' 779–80.

1245 Cf Ep 1789 introduction, where it is stated that 'four sheets of supplementary material were added to the fourth edition.' These 'sheets,' each a ternion, together made fifty-six pages, which included the letter from Erasmus, the appendices, the indexes, and the subject index; cf 'Prefaces and Letters' 779.

1246 For the title page, entirely new in *1527*, see n1240 above. After *1519* Erasmus made no changes in his letter to Pope Leo that 'materially affect the sense' (cf 'Prefaces and Letters' 766), while Leo's letter to Erasmus remained, of course, unchanged. The letters (in translation) of Erasmus to Leo and Leo to Erasmus are printed in 'Prefaces and Letters' 766–73.

*Contra morosos*, to address the most severe of these. Among his critics perhaps none had been more annoying than Cousturier. Although he was by no means alone in maintaining that the Vulgate was the work of the Holy Spirit, Cousturier did so with unforgiving insistence: to change the Spirit's work was tantamount to blasphemy. There are numerous refinements in the *Apologia* of *1527*, but the only major addition[1247] is directed at Cousturier and his fellow believers to reassert the important Erasmian hermeneutical principle that only the original text of Scripture comprises the work of the Holy Spirit, a text whose authority is therefore sovereign.

The *Contra morosos* was considerably expanded in the edition of 1527.[1248] The additions clarified and emphasized the essential aspects of his work. Erasmus explained again with sharpened articulation the intent of his work. He offered a fresh justification for the style of his translation, a simple style, he maintained, one that accepts where necessary the theological 'jargon' of Scripture – words so peculiar to Scripture that substitutes must not be employed. To the authority of the commentaries of the 'orthodox' Greeks – Basil, Chrysostom, Cyril, and to a lesser extent Athanasius – he gave renewed emphasis, appropriately so since he had been able to use the Greek Chrysostom more extensively in the fourth edition than hitherto.[1249] Feeling the pressure, no doubt, from men like Cousturier, he justified once again his enterprise, a revision of the Vulgate, in effect a new translation based on the Greek and the interpretation of the Fathers. He rejected the 'Lesbian rule' that 'what is most widely accepted' was 'to be considered right' and substituted his own 'most certain rule' that the true text of Scripture is found by 'comparing with each other languages, translations, explanations, copies, and [doing] so with sober judgment and without wrangling.'[1250] In nine new paragraphs (82a–i)

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1247 A full page (fol A5 r–v) in the 1527 edition; in Holborn more than a page (168:13–169:23); 467–9 below

1248 In *1519* and *1522* the paragraphs had been numbered – 111 plus an introduction. In *1527* they were not numbered, but there were in fact 128 paragraphs plus the introduction. In *1535* these were increased to 140 plus the introduction. Numerous paragraphs already in place in the two previous editions received additions in *1527* and *1535*, some of which are quite extensive. In the translation in this volume (799–863) paragraph numbers have been inserted; cf the Translator's Note to *Contra morosos*, 798 with n10.

1249 We may recall here an observation made above, 'New Testament Scholarship' 77 ('Appeal to the Exegetes: Ancient'): Erasmus accepted as a principle of textual criticism that while the biblical text of a Greek expositor might have undergone change to conform to the Vulgate, the discussion in the commentary might well be a reliable guide to what the expositor had actually read.

1250 Cf paragraph 79c.

he defended his humble work as a philologist against its haughty despisers, answering contempt with contempt: 'Do we not laugh at the stargazers who look upward to contemplate the heavenly bodies so intently that they bang their shins on a rock!'[1251] Approaching the conclusion of this piece, he was able – as his celebrity had grown – to enlarge vastly the roster of his eminent supporters, the magic of whose distinguished names would easily evaporate the significance of his critics, names that acted as witnesses to confirm his case. Finally, in an *amplificatio* entirely new in *1527* he set up, only to knock down, all the straw men posed as his critics.[1252]

**1/** TEXT

In the Greek text of *1527* Erasmus made few changes from that of *1522*. Misprints continued to be corrected. Fresh efforts were made to eliminate the confusion between the first and second plural personal pronouns in the Greek: ἡμεῖς and ὑμεῖς. One case, Ephesians 1:12–13, had some interesting ramifications for the construction of the text and the translation, and reveals the disjunction that could occur between text and translation, and between both and the annotation; this disjunction could arise in part no doubt from carelessness, but possibly also from a method of work by which at times text, translation, and annotation were considered independently of each other. We can see the problem perhaps best if we arrange text and translation in tabular form.

*1516*:

VG: In whom **you** also [hoped] after **you** had heard the word of truth, the gospel of **your** salvation

ER Greek: In whom **we** also [hope] since **we** have heard the word of truth, the gospel of **your** salvation

ER Latin: In whom **you** also hope, since **you** have heard the word of truth, the gospel of **your** salvation

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1251 Cf paragraph 82d.

1252 Cf paragraphs 110e, f, g. By placing the lists of 'Errors in the Vulgate' (the 'Indexes') after the annotations in the second volume, Erasmus disconnected them from the *Contra morosos* that remained as a preface in the first volume. In this way, the *Contra morosos* became rhetorically self-contained: the artificial proofs (inductive arguments) followed by the inartificial proofs (witnesses) precede the concluding *amplificatio* and conclusion (the *peroratio*). However, in consequence of this new arrangement, the 'Indexes' no longer effectively serve as a 'deposition' of evidence for the case; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 119 with n516.

*1519*:
ER Greek: same as *1516*
ER Latin: In whom **we** also hope, since **we** have heard the word of truth, the gospel of **your** salvation

*1522*:
Greek: same as *1516*, *1519*
ER Latin: same as *1519*

*1527*:
ER Greek: In whom **you** also hope, since **you** have heard the word of truth, the gospel of **your** salvation
ER Latin: In whom **you** also hope since **you** have heard the word of truth, the gospel of **your** salvation

In the *1516* annotation (*in quo et vos cum audissetis*) Erasmus remarked that 'the Greek manuscripts have first person' – *we* and *our* salvation – thus justifying his Greek text, but contradicting his translation. In *1527* he noted that the Complutensian Polyglot Bible had the second person consistently; Erasmus was persuaded to follow its text and in his annotation qualified the evidence of the Greek to read, 'Some Greek manuscripts have first person.' But already in *1516* Erasmus had observed in the rather lengthy annotation that much of the difficulty arises from the ambiguity of the Greek word in the preceding line of the biblical text – how to identify those 'who before hoped.' Certainly the passage reveals in a remarkable way the tortuous path followed, in some cases, to arrive at a satisfactory construction of the text with its translation.

The influence of the Complutensian Polygot Bible on the text of *1527* is particularly interesting. Andrew Brown has shown that the *1527* text of Revelation contains 144 changes in the Greek text that agree with the Complutensian edition, eighty-six of which produce closer agreement with the Vulgate. In the famous passage of Revelation 22:16b–21 five changes in *1527* can be attributed to the Complutensian text. Brown notes, however, that there were more than twenty other points on which Erasmus' Greek text needed correction and for which the Complutensian Bible offered a reading supported by most of the Greek manuscripts, but which Erasmus left unchanged.[1253]

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1253 Cf ASD VI-4 12–13. For the Complutensian Polyglot Bible see *Apologia* n34 and the *Contra morosos* paragraphs 41a with n124 and 110b with n298.

**2/** TRANSLATION

By *1522* the text of the translation was firmly in place. In 1527 there are, indeed, minor changes in punctuation and orthography, but very few substantive changes in translation: in the Gospels and Acts just over a dozen such altogether, and of these half are reversions to the Vulgate. In the *1527* translation of the Epistles there are not more than half a dozen substantive changes from *1522*. Of some interest are Erasmus' continuing attempts to mend the occasional disjunction between the translation and his printed Greek text. In Mark 13:34 Erasmus' published Greek text always read *ἐξουσίαν* (VG *potestatem* 'power'), but from *1516* to *1522* Erasmus had translated *substantia* 'substance' as though the Greek were *οὐσίαν*. In *1527* he reverted in translation to the Vulgate, explaining in his annotation (*potestatem cuiusque operis*) that both readings were found in the Greek manuscripts, and previously he had preferred *οὐσία* 'substance.' In Acts 4:12 correspondence between text and translation was effected by an addition to the Greek text. Erasmus had consistently translated with the Vulgate 'There is no other name under heaven given,' in spite of the fact that his text omitted 'under heaven'; in *1527* he added the words to the Greek text, without, however, any explanation or clarification in his annotation (*datum hominibus*).[1254]

*Volume II: The Annotations*

In the 1527 edition Erasmus added nearly 150 new annotations – new in that they were introduced by their own cue phrase and usually were given their own paragraph. This was somewhat more than he had introduced in *1522*. The new annotations are primarily philological in character. There were also, of course, many additions to previous annotations. These additions for the most part serve the function of clarification and completion, filling out an expression, an idea, a reference. They supply a Latin translation of a Greek word previously left untranslated or, vice versa, supply the Greek for an expression previously given in Latin only; or they may offer an alternative translation, complementary to one already given. They correct minor errors or qualify statements that in retrospect appeared somewhat rash – a stated or implied 'all' might become 'some.' On occasion the additions have implications for theology, for the life of the church and society, implications Erasmus was seldom reluctant to point out. The manner is now familiar to us from the previous editions and needs no demonstration here. It will,

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1254 Perhaps influenced by the Complutensian Polyglot; cf ASD VI-2 245.

however, be worth our while to highlight several aspects of special interest in the *1527* annotations.

### 1/ PHILOLOGY AND THE TEXT OF SCRIPTURE

*(i) The Translator*

Because the translator of the Vulgate was a central point of reference in Erasmus' work on the New Testament, we should note briefly the position the Translator assumes in the 1527 edition. In fact, in this edition the Translator seems to command considerably more respect than he was granted in the original edition of 1516. Here and there his translation meets with explicit approval: 'not bad,' 'good Latin,' 'correct Latin,' 'better than Jerome,' an ironic statement, however, whose implied point was to suggest that the real Jerome was not the translator of the Epistles.[1255] Only rarely in the additions does Erasmus explicitly accuse the Translator of solecisms.[1256] Nevertheless, the respect granted is compromised by the old criticisms offered once again, the familiar charges against the Translator's variety, inconsistency, affectation, tendency to paraphrase, and, frequently, the improper Latin translation of the Greek: *acceptio personae* for the Greek *προσωπολημψία*, which 'signifies nothing to Latin ears'; or *confundo* 'confound' for the Greek *καταισχύνω*, properly rendered by *pudefacio* 'make ashamed'; 'What Latin speaker would take *confundit* to mean *pudefacit*?' remarks Erasmus.[1257] For Erasmus the standard of good Latin remains as in *1516* the approved authors of classical antiquity, in *1527* Suetonius above all, who alone of all the classical authors appears repeatedly in the additions.[1258]

*(ii) The Fate of Biblical Texts*

From *1516* Erasmus had questioned the authenticity of some of the later canonical books: Hebrews, James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, and Revelation. Stirred by the criticism chiefly, no doubt, of Noël Béda, whose dark shadow was looming over Erasmus as he revised his annotations for the fourth edition, Erasmus made substantial additions in *1527* to his remarks on the authorship

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1255 Cf the annotation on Eph 5:13 (*omne enim quod*).

1256 But cf the annotation on Mark 2:16 (*videntes quia manducaret*).

1257 Cf the annotations on Rom 2:11 ('acceptance of persons'), where the preferred spelling is *προσωπολημψία*, and on Rom 5:5 ('does not confound').

1258 Cicero, Pliny, and Quintus Curtius each receives a few citations, but of the nearly twenty classical authors cited most appear only once in the *1527* additions.

of Hebrews, 2 and 3 John, and Revelation.[1259] However, in the annotation on Acts 1:1 (*primum quidem sermonem*) Erasmus finds a particularly apt occasion to express in *1527* a very humanistic interest in and appreciation for a text that was both biblical and historical. He had already in earlier editions registered his surprise at the fate of this text: throughout the centuries not a single author had commented upon it! When in 1526 he had at last acquired a copy of Chrysostom's *Homilies on Acts*, he learned from Chrysostom's comments that Acts was virtually unknown even in his era. Moreover, the manuscripts of the book showed that Acts had been thumbed less extensively among the Greeks than the Gospels and Pauline Epistles. Snippets from the *Gloss* gave evidence that there had been commentaries, even relatively learned ones, on the book, but these commentaries, Erasmus suspected, had been deliberately suppressed in order to give greater value to the fragments published by the compilers! That Acts had survived at all was undoubtedly the work of the Holy Spirit who cared to preserve for the church an authoritative text of the primitive age of Christianity.

*(iii) The Clarification of Language*

The annotations of *1527*, like those of previous editions, sparkle with the highly pictorial exposition of biblical language. A few of these may have a special appeal. In the annotation on Romans 8:26 ('the Spirit makes request') Erasmus invited his readers to recognize in the word *ὑπερεντυγχάνει* 'intercedes' (RSV) an intended comparison of the Spirit to a prefect 'in charge of all appeals.'[1260] He reduces the word *ἀποκαραδοκίαν* 'eager expectation' (RSV) to its component parts to create the striking image of one who is 'straining to see, mouth wide open, the whole head bent forward.'[1261] The word *νηφάλιον*, ambiguously 'vigilant' and 'temperate,' evokes a double image: with

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1259 The remarks appear at the end of the final annotation on Hebrews, 3 John, and Revelation. A short addition is inserted into the first annotation on James (*Iacobus apostolus*). For Erasmus' response to Béda on the question of authenticity, especially of Hebrews, see *Divinationes ad notata Bedae*, *Elenchus in censuras Bedae*, and *Supputatio* ASD IX-5 49:6–50:19, 162:37–45, 268:267–270:296 respectively. The Paris theologians later censured Erasmus for expressing doubts about the authenticity of these books; cf the *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* CWE 82 114–26.

1260 CWE 56 222

1261 Cf the annotation on Phil 1:20 (*secundum expectationem*). The image is repeated in a *1535* addition to the annotation on Rom 8:19 ('for the expectation of the creation') CWE 56 216–17.

reference to history, the sacred rites in which water instead of wine was used for libations; and, with an eye to contemporary society, a bishop who cannot sleep if he is 'vigilant,' and who cannot be vigilant if he is indulgent.[1262]

Among such philological observations that, however brief, enrich the text of the *Annotations*, Erasmus offered in *1527* a discussion of two words that have particular importance. The first focused especially on the problematic sequence in Matthew 5:22 (anger, racha, fool). In the 1527 addition to the annotation on this verse (*qui dixerit fratri suo racha*) Erasmus was responding to the document *Racha* that Aleandro had circulated in Rome in 1524 or 1525.[1263] This document had attacked Erasmus' philological competence at two points: his explanation of *gehenna* (Matthew 10:28) as 'Tophet' in the annotation on Matthew 10:27 (*praedicate*), and his attempt to explain *racha* in his annotation on the word in *1516* and *1519*. *Racha* was difficult. Erasmus had recognized the obvious gradation implied in the verse's sequence of 'anger,' *racha*, and 'fool,' but how could the word 'fool' constitute a reproach worthy of *gehenna* 'hellfire'? In the *1527* addition Erasmus acknowledged that the meaning of *racha*, indeed even its spelling, is not well understood[1264] and observed that Paul calls himself a fool, hardly therefore a sinful act. Erasmus' solution forced the philologian to go beyond simple dictionary definition to recognize that verbal expression – the meaning of a word in context – is not complete without intent. Thus in this case, to call someone a fool is not in itself a sin, but when said with an evil intent can become sinful and hence an appropriate climax in the emotional progression from 'anger' to *racha* to 'fool.'

Quite different is the philological excursion in the annotation, entirely new in *1527*, on Romans 1:17 ('from faith unto faith'), in which Erasmus undertakes to define the meaning of the Latin *fides* in relation to its Greek parallel *πίστις*. A definition of 'faith' was timely in 1527. Erasmus was certainly aware of the important role of faith in Lutheran doctrine, as his controversy with Luther between 1524 and 1527 reveals.[1265] Perhaps more pressing and more immediate was Béda's criticism that Erasmus had proven himself

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1262 Cf the annotation on 1 Tim 3:2 (*prudentem*). Erasmus refers to the bishop here in the image of the *speculator* a 'looker-out,' ie 'one who watches.' Cf the paraphrase on 1 Tim 3:1 CWE 44 18 with n1.

1263 For Aleandro as author see 'New Testament Scholarship' 278 with n1173.

1264 Translated in NRSV as 'insult' with a footnote, 'Gr "*say raca to*" (an obscure term of abuse)'

1265 Cf the entry 'faith' in the subject index to the *De libero arbitrio* and *Hyperaspistes* 1 and 2 CWE 77 785.

Lutheran in his representation of faith in the *Paraphrases*.[1266] While Béda's critique might well have prompted the annotation in *1527*, it is reasonable to see the ultimate source of the annotation in the much earlier remarks of critics: in 1519 Jacobus Latomus had implied that Erasmus 'shows very little interest in defining what faith is,' and in 1520 both Lee and López Zúñiga had directed criticism against Erasmus' comments on Hebrews 11:1, in which he had ventured to say, against a strong tradition, that the venerable statement 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for' (AV) was not a definition.[1267] Significantly the *1527* annotation on Romans 1:17 does not speak to Béda's theological concern; in his response to Béda Erasmus focused not on the definition of faith but on the relation of faith to saving grace. The annotation, on the other hand, proceeds philologically, constructing a definition on the basis of 'normal use.' This mode of definition does indeed, in the end, lead to a theological conclusion, but one typically Erasmian in the implicit (and ironic) reliance on human conjecture: faith is trust in the trustworthiness of God, a trust based on an empirically observable sequence of promise and fulfilment.[1268]

### **2/** SCRIPTURE AND THE HIDDEN ARTS OF ARTISTIC COMPOSITION: STYLE

As humanist, Erasmus had, not surprisingly, displayed at many points throughout his literary work an interest in style. He regarded style as an important indicator of authenticity in writings, both secular and sacred. In the Arguments prefacing the *Paraphrases* on both Romans (1517) and the Johannine Epistles (1521), Erasmus had spoken of the authors' style as an important key to understanding the Epistles. In the *Annotations* of 1516 he explained that sometimes the reason for the difficulties in Paul's text lay in the Apostle's style, which reflected, as Jerome affirmed, the influence of the Cilician manner of speaking in Tarsus, his birthplace.[1269]

In the annotations of *1527* the discussion of style assumes a more dominant position than in the previous editions of the New Testament, and

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1266 Cf *Divinationes ad notata Bedae* ASD IX-5 118:436–120:467, *Elenchus in censuras Bedae* ibidem 170:164–5, 202:886–203:893, and *Supputatio* ibidem 451:541–452:557, 568:401–14.

1267 For Latomus see *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* CWE 71 68 #75; for Lee, *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 2* (Note 220) CWE 72 321; for López Zúñiga, ASD IX-2 242:289–244:294.

1268 For the annotation see CWE 56 42–5. The mode of definition in this *1527* annotation on Rom 1:17 has a brief antecedent in the *1519 Ratio*; cf 659 with n895.

1269 Cf eg the annotation on 2 Cor 11:6 (*sed non scientia*).

Erasmus exploits its interpretive value. He shows how style can function to facilitate the tasks of the philologian. In the annotation on John 1:3–4 (*et sine ipso factum est nihil*) Erasmus appealed to the characteristic style of the author to construct a problematic sentence. Although Erasmus had laboured over this passage in both *1516* and *1519*, it was in *1527* that he brought style to bear on the problem. Noting that it is the Johannine 'style' to link clauses by repeating at the beginning of a clause a word found in the preceding clause, Erasmus defended the reading of 1:3–4, '… without him *was* nothing *made*; what *was made* in him was life,'[1270] and supported his argument by an analysis of John 1:1–5. In the annotation on 2 Thessalonians 1:6 (*retribuere retributionem*) he found the 'true reading' in the stylistic 'pattern of contraries.' Likewise, in *1527* he observed the parallelism in 1 John 2:12–14, by recognizing which, he somewhat smugly added, he had been prevented from 'philosophizing' on the passage, as some other 'sharp-eyed theologians ignorant of Greek' had done.[1271]

But even 'philosophizing' can be legitimized through the proper interpretation of stylistic features.[1272] Thus in a 1527 addition to the annotation on Colossians 2:14–15 (*chirographum decreti*) Erasmus recognizes an extended metaphor. In this annotation he links 'philosophizing' with stylistic analysis. After drawing out the 'metaphor taken from legal obligations,' he added: 'It is not idle to philosophize on the concealed meaning of words, especially in the writings of St Paul, whose prose everywhere abounds in ornamental patterns and figures.'

In fact, in the *1527* additions Erasmus frequently calls attention to the stylistic features of the prose in the Pauline Epistles from Romans to Titus.

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1270 Erasmus remarks that this was the 'Latin construction in common use today.' It is indeed the reading of both the *1527* Vulgate and Froben-Petri, also of Weber 1658, NEB, and NRSV. The Clementine Vulgate, however, reads like AV and RSV, '… without him was nothing made that was made. In him was life'; and so, in fact, did Erasmus read in his translation in all editions, in accordance with the punctuation in his Greek text. For this as the 'characteristic style' of the Johannine author see the Argument of 1 John CWE 44 173.

1271 Cf the annotation on 1 John 2:13 (*scribo vobis patres*).

1272 In the annotations of *1527* Erasmus continued to be generally suspicious of philosophizing. For negative observations on 'philosophizing' in this edition see the annotations on Luke 4:38 (*magnis febribus*) and 2 Cor 4:17 (*quod in praesenti est momentaneum et leve*). But, as here, Erasmus did allow for a type of philosophizing; for his wider use of this intriguing term see 'New Testament Scholarship' 118 with n509, *Methodus* 444 with n95, and *Ratio* 632, 670, and 676 with nn744, 954, and 984.

He facilitated the recognition of the rhetorical character of the Pauline text by marking a passage from time to time as *picturatus* 'patterned,' *modulatus* 'measured,' *floridus* 'lively and colourful,' *iucundus* 'delightful,' *non ingrata* 'not unpleasing.'[1273] Indeed, not only is the language of 2 Thessalonians 3:11 'not unpleasing,' but Erasmus goes further to note the *gemina gratia* 'double pleasure' he finds in two words, one pleasure arising from the similarity of sounds, another from the contrasting image: *ἐργαζομένους … περιεργαζομένους* 'being busy … being a busybody.' After pointing out the stylistic features of 2 Corinthians 9:6, Erasmus in *1527* offers a somewhat apologetic defence of his attention to the Apostle's style: 'To note such things everywhere would be "superstitious," but to observe them on occasion will help to bring clarity and pleasure [in reading] the prose of Paul.'[1274]

Erasmus' interest in *1527* in the style of the Pauline writings led to lengthy stylistic analysis of three passages in Romans, each recalling Augustine's *De doctrina christiana*. In each case Erasmus attempted to place the prose within the traditional rhetorical categories of 'high,' 'middle,' and 'low' style. In the annotation on Romans 8:35 ('who therefore will separate us') he recalls Augustine's evaluation of Romans 8:29–35 as a 'model of artistic prose that combines force (*δείνωσις*) with ornament.' After a careful analysis, he concludes that the speech was 'elevated, because Paul, breathed upon, as it were, by the divine power, says nothing in the low style,' and he asks, 'What did Cicero ever say that effected more fully the grand manner?'[1275] Again following Augustine, Erasmus demonstrates how the prose of Romans 12:6–21 exemplifies the middle style.[1276] He concludes the annotations on the next chapter by an analysis of the rhetorical devices in Romans 13:12–14, noting Augustine's judgment that this, too, was an example of the middle style 'appropriate to exhortation.' Erasmus himself points out the 'force' in the artistic arrangement of words in the last clause of the chapter and describes its prose rhythm.[1277]

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1273 Cf respectively the annotations on 2 Cor 4:17 (cf preceding note and ASD VI-8 374:795–6), Rom 2:12 ('have sinned without the Law') where *modulatus* is translated 'rhythmic,' 1 Cor 12:11 (*dividens singulis prout vult*), Col 2:16 (*iudicet in cibo aut in potu*), 2 Thess 3:11 (*nihil operantes, sed cur. etc*).

1274 Cf the annotation on the verse (*de benedictionibus*).

1275 Cf the annotation on Rom 8:35 ('who therefore will separate us').

1276 Cf the annotation on Rom 12:21 ('do not be overcome by evil').

1277 Cf the annotation on Rom 13:14 ('in desires'). The final clause of the chapter is: 'Make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires' (RSV).

Erasmus' remarkable interest in the prose style of Paul may not be unrelated to the growing antagonism between himself and the proponents of Ciceronianism, an antagonism that underlay the publication in March 1528 of his book *Ciceronianus*. With that book he also published a work on the pronunciation of Greek and Latin, *De recta pronuntiatione*,[1278] a study that seems anticipated in the *1527* annotation on John 14:26 (*paracletus autem spiritus sanctus*). By *1519* this annotation had already become lengthy, but it maintained its original focus of criticizing and correcting the pronunciation of Greek words in liturgical settings, specifically *paracletus*, *Kyrie eleeison*, and *Christus*. In *1527* Erasmus added more than half a page devoted to a general discussion of the pronunciation of the classical languages, a discussion essentially tangential to the problem of liturgical usage, beginning with the observation that the universal neglect of proper pronunciation had resulted in a babel of sounds. The addition had little to do with the clarification of Scripture but much to do with a subject of interest that would find definitive form in Erasmus' humanist publications of the following year. The humanist approach to the study of Scripture passed readily to broader humanist concerns.

### 3/ CHURCH AND SOCIETY

The *1527* annotations continue to effect the laconic manner of social and ecclesiastical criticism as it was introduced in *1516*. The criticisms may be sharper in *1527*, but themes and subjects remain much the same, while Erasmus proved himself once again the master of the cutting jab. A few examples will illustrate.

(i) On the liturgy: annotation on Luke 2:14 (*hominibus bonae voluntatis*). Referring to the Song of the Angels in the contemporary liturgy, Erasmus notes its extended form so that his reader 'might know the manner in which the mass has grown, the important parts abbreviated, while the additions have little relevance to the matter in hand.'

(ii) On church music: annotation on 1 Corinthians 14:19 (*quam decem milia*). In this annotation, criticism of church music begun in *1516* had been considerably expanded in *1519*, with a further addition in *1522*. In *1527* Erasmus could still not leave the subject alone. He decried the practice cultivated by

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1278 For the growing antagonism between Erasmus and the Ciceronians see the introduction to *Ciceronianus* CWE 28 324–7. For the publication of *De recta pronuntiatione* see CWE 26 358–9. Cf also 'New Testament Scholarship' 278 with n1175.

the Benedictines in Britain of maintaining a chorus of boys and young men to sing in a pretentious manner the liturgy in honour of the Blessed Virgin, and he deplored that 'depraved form of singing' called the *fauburdum* 'fauxbourdon,' encouraged by those 'too stupid to learn music.'

(iii) On celibacy: annotation on 1 Timothy 3:2 (*unius uxoris virum*). Continuing the criticism in previous editions of the currently acccepted ecclesiastical practice of celibacy among monks and priests, he adds a sentence in*1527*: 'Now the world has innumerable celibates, practically none chaste. In fact, a man is not chaste if he abstains from sex just because it is forbidden.'

(iv) On monastic piety: annotation on Acts 20:35 (*beatius est dare magis quam accipere*). 'Someone denied himself the eating of meats throughout his life and found imitators; another always went barefoot and found imitators; another wore the monk's cincture, and others zealously emulated him; another always wore a grey habit and found emulators; but there is no one who emulates this most splendid example of Paul [of giving, not receiving]!'

(v) On episcopal hospitality: annotation on 1 Timothy 3:2 (*hospitalem*). Erasmus contrasts current practice with the expectations of primitive Christianity. 'Now they call it hospitality when they receive satraps and kings and send them on their way with gifts.' From *1516* to *1522* Erasmus had observed in commenting on Acts 9:43, where Peter, prince of apostles, accepted the hospitality of a lowly tanner, 'Now three royal palaces are scarcely enough to entertain the vicar of Peter.' In what may seem a curious reversal, in *1527* Erasmus omitted the remark from the annotation on the verse (*apud Simonem coriarium*).

(vi) On warring bishops: annotation on 2 Corinthians 10:4 (*sed potentia Deo*). Another addition to a previous attack on the practice of bishops going to war: 'Now when there is need of force, one sees that the successors of the apostles have swords and gun-powder, in fact everything worthy of a brave warrior, but where the front line of vices is to be attacked by the sword of the divine word, they have neither tongue nor hand.'

(vii) On war: annotation on Luke 22:36 (*sed nunc qui habet sacculum*). In the *1527* addition to an already long note on war, Erasmus responds to those who might wish to know whether he condemns all war categorically. His answer is a regretful 'No' and a reluctant affirmation of the 'just-war' theory. While he declares arms absolutely inappropriate for 'apostolic men,' that is, bishops, he acknowledges that some evils are worse than war and applies the theory of accommodation, imaged in the 'circles' of the *Ratio*, to legitimize

the participation of Christians in 'necessary wars.' Still, such participation 'is tolerated, not approved by evangelical doctrine.' It should be noted that this is not Erasmus' first articulation of the just-war theory; in the *1523* paraphrase on Luke 3:14 the evangelist as narrator offers a qualified justification of war in terms very similar to those in this *1527* annotation.

### 4/ THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

Although the additions Erasmus made to his annotations in *1527* are by no means dominated by theological issues, Erasmus does, nevertheless, address theological problems of considerable interest. Perhaps chief among these are matters that seemed to be at the heart of the Lutheran reform movement: the relation of Law and gospel, the relation of the age of salvation by works – the observance of the Law – and the age of grace, that is, of salvation as a gratuitous gift, requiring only a response of faith quite apart from merits earned. In so far as this issue is raised in the *1527* annotations, Erasmus seems to have in view not Luther but a hostile Noël Béda. Since 1524 Béda had been combing through Erasmus' *Paraphrases* in search of heresy, and in the 1526 publication of his *Annotationes* directed against Lefèvre and Erasmus' *Paraphrases*, he had found in Luther a convenient peg on which to hang the charge of heresy against Erasmus.[1279] Erasmus had made a preliminary response to Béda in 1526, a response that he refined and perfected in the *Supputatio* published in March 1527, the same month in which the fourth edition of the *Novum Testamentum* appeared.[1280] In the annotations of *1527* Erasmus brings Béda's concerns to sharp focus in the discussions on merits and grace.

Erasmus' portrait of Mary in his paraphrases on Luke 1:28 and 48 was offensive to Béda because it credited God's choice of Mary, the *theotokos*, not to her merits but simply to the grace of God, for Erasmus had interpreted the Greek *κεχαριτωμένη* as 'one favoured by God' in contrast to the Vulgate's 'full of grace.' Similarly, in representing the Greek *τὴν ταπείνωσιν* (1:48) as 'lowly estate,' that is, social and economic status, Erasmus had seemed to deprive Mary of the merit of humility, a virtue. In *1519* he had expressed his views clearly in his annotations on Luke 1. Now in *1527*, in a single lengthy addition to the annotation on Luke 1:48 (*humilitatem ancillae*) Erasmus defended

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1279 For the controversy with Béda see 'New Testament Scholarship' 269; and for the full title of Béda's *Annotationes* see n1123 above.

1280 Béda's criticisms of Erasmus' statements concerning Law and grace, faith and merits, as they appeared in the *Paraphrase on Luke*, brought a response from Erasmus in *Supputatio* ASD IX-5 384:925–392:124.

his position on both words but addressed especially the meaning of *humilitatem ancillae*, pointing in a strictly philological discussion to the unavoidable sense of the word required by the context. At the same time, he left no doubt that it was Béda who had prompted the discussion – that 'Paris theologian who regards himself as the very Atlas of a tottering church.' The question of merits and grace arises again in the *1527* addition to the annotation on Luke 2:14 (*hominibus bonae voluntatis*), in which verse Erasmus had read 'peace on earth, good will towards men,' having argued in *1516* that the 'good will' is the favour of God towards those who were without any merit. Erasmus' reading had already been questioned by Edward Lee.[1281] In *1527*, once more in a lengthy argument again essentially philological, Erasmus defended the position he had taken earlier. Béda's criticism had demonstrated that Luther had brought the issue of grace and merits to a new level of importance, and Erasmus offered an extended response to the criticism in these annotations on Luke 1:48 and 2:14. Yet already in 1526 he had disavowed the influence of Luther on his formulations: 'If the Lutherans have something to say about merits, it makes no difference to me.'[1282]

In the annotations on the Epistles there are no long additions in *1527* on the subject of grace and merits, but several short additions show that the subject has not been forgotten. In annotations on Romans 1:1, 1:5, 1:7, 3:24, and 9:32 short additions of a sentence or two define 'grace' and show how it contrasts with 'works,' negating the value of merits.[1283] In annotations on 1 Corinthians 15:10 (*non ego autem, sed gratia Dei mecum*) and 2 Corinthians 6:1 (*adiuvantes autem exhortamur*) he holds up cooperating grace as a term not to be feared. Nowhere in the annotations of *1527* does he speak on the subject in more personal terms than in the annotation on Ephesians 1:6 (*in laudem gloriae gratiae suae*): 'This apostle [Paul] everywhere extols grace, minimizing trust in human works. There now are those who err in either direction. The safest way is in the middle, but if one must move to one side or the other, it is safer to turn to the side of grace, wherein Christ is glorified, than to our works, wherein human beings are glorified.'

Just as Erasmus believed that his representation of 'grace and merits' in the *Paraphrases* was in no way a tilt towards Lutheranism, so, he insisted,

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1281 Cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei I* (Note 30) CWE 72 122–6. For the *1519* annotations see 72–3 with nn296, 298.

1282 *Divinationes ad notata Bedae* ASD IX-5 93:901

1283 Cf respectively the annotations: 'called an apostle,' 'grace and apostleship,' 'called saints,' 'through redemption,' 'as if from works.'

his representation of faith had no regard to Luther. Again in the *Divinationes ad notata Bedae* Erasmus had declared, 'What Luther teaches about faith without works does not, I think, make any difference to me.'[1284] Apart from the major attempt to define faith reviewed above,[1285] the *1527* additions revert to the subject relatively seldom, but where they do, the additions are brief and characteristically contrast gospel faith with confidence in human reasoning; they are not pointed to explore the doctrine of *sola fides*. Thus in the annotation on Romans 1:17 ('by faith'), added in *1527*, Erasmus notes that Paul is directing his words against the philosophers who must learn to subordinate human understanding to the divine words.[1286] To the discussion on the Eucharistic words of 1 Corinthians 11:24, 'This is my body,' he added a sentence: 'The human intellect must, as Paul says, be taken captive to the obedience of faith, so that the less human reason reaches out for understanding, the greater is the merit of faith.'[1287] In the annotations on 1 Timothy 6:12 (*fidei*), 1 Timothy 6:20 (*falsi nominis*), and 2 Timothy 2:22 (*fidem spem*) faith in *1527* is contrasted with quarrelsome investigation, false knowledge, and ostentatious disputations. These antitheses between obedient faith and sophisticated intellectualism echo the formulations Erasmus had earlier made in his criticism of the scholasticism he believed dominated the theological faculties of the universities.

In his *Annotationes contra Erasmum Roterodamum* López Zúñiga had faulted Erasmus for failing to articulate properly the orthodox view of the Trinity. López Zúñiga had noted Erasmus' explanation in the *1516* annotation on John 1:1 (*et verbum erat apud Deum*) that the word 'God' in Scripture is usually applied to the Father, very seldom to Christ, and he had counted ten passages in which he contended that Jesus Christ was, in effect, called God. In *1522* Erasmus removed the remark from the annotation on John 1:1, no doubt as a gesture towards López Zúñiga and not from conviction, for the point was allowed to stand elsewhere, for example, in the annotation on Romans 1:4 ('of Jesus Christ our Lord'), where he notes that the apostles generally apply to God the term 'Father' and to Christ the term 'Lord.'[1288] Indeed, in *1527* Erasmus was prepared to make the case more emphatically, calling Tertullian to witness in the annotation on Rom 1:7 ('from God our

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1284 *Divinationes ad notata Bedae* ASD IX-5 144:49–50; cf n1282 above.
1285 Cf 300 with n1265 above.
1286 Cf CWE 56 46.
1287 Cf the annotation on the verse (*hoc est corpus meum*) ASD VI-8 230:301–3.
1288 For Erasmus' response to López Zúñiga see ASD IX-2 124:319–130:425. Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 70–1 with n287.

Father and the Lord Jesus Christ'), citing that influential passage from the *Adversus Praxean* 13, where the image of the sun and its ray illustrates the relation of Father and Son, a relationship requiring appropriate terminology. Erasmus quotes Tertullian: 'I follow the apostle, so that if the Father and the Son both must be named, I shall call God the 'Father,' and Jesus Christ I shall name 'Lord.'[1289] In the *1527* annotations Erasmus does not return to this point frequently but often enough, nevertheless, to emphasize the philological validity of his original claim.[1290]

In the case of the Johannine comma (1 John 5:7–8) circumstances provided an opportunity to say yet more – considerably more – in the annotation on the passage (*tres sunt qui testimonium dant in caelo*). As we have seen, Paolo Bombace's letter with the witness of Codex Vaticanus to the passage had arrived just in time to add a brief notice of it in the *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae*, but no notice of it had appeared in the annotation of *1522*.[1291] Meanwhile, two manuscripts from Constance and the Spanish Complutensian Polyglot Bible had come into Erasmus' hands, and he did not hesitate to rise to the occasion. The *1527* addition begins by an appeal to the authority both of the antiquity of the manuscript from the Vatican Library and of the pope as its possessor. It proceeds to a lengthy and detailed comparison of the the text of the Polyglot with that of the British manuscript (Montfortianus). It concludes with a reaffirmation of a solution stated and illustrated in 1520 in the debate with Edward Lee, that a philological reading of the passage shows that 1 John 5:7–8 makes a statement not about the divine essence but about the unity of charity and volition among the Persons of the Trinity. This reaffirmation does not move much beyond the argument of 1520.[1292] In fact, the *1527* annotations did not put to rest hostile doubts about Erasmus' Trinitarian views. Even as the distribution of the fourth edition of the New Testament began, Spanish monks were formulating articles that would challenge Erasmus' terminology for the Persons of the Trinity and his 'Arianizing' exposition of the text of 1 John 5:7–8.[1293]

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1289 CWE 56 32

1290 Cf the annotations on Col 3:17 (*Deo et patri*), 2 Thess 2:16 (*Deus et pater noster*), 1 Tim 6:15 (*rex regum*) ASD VI-10 116:217–22, 2 Tim 4:1 (*Deo et Iesu Christo*); also similarly, the annotation on Eph 4:6 (*et in omnibus vobis*) ASD VI-9 320:844–7.

1291 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 197 with n766.

1292 Cf ASD VI-10 546:348–550:413 and *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 3* (Note 25) CWE 72 408–11.

1293 Cf *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1029E–1033A, 1040A–1041F. For the Spanish monks see 'New Testament Scholarship' 282 with n1195.

Three further annotations offer expositions of the biblical text with interesting theological implications: (1) Original sin. In 1520 Edward Lee had challenged Erasmus' exposition of the text of Romans 5:12 and 14 as implying 'that original sin is an invention of the theologians.'[1294] Later, in 1526, Béda had marked Erasmus' paraphrastic interpretation of Romans 5:12 as unorthodox.[1295] Erasmus would not answer the charges fully until his final edition of the New Testament in 1535, after he had been challenged once again by the Paris theologians;[1296] but in *1527* he bolstered support for the view that interprets the 'sin' of Romans 5:12 and 14 as the sin of the individual, not as the sin inherited from Adam, by appealing – in passing – to Chrysostom, and more substantively to Pseudo-Jerome, that is, Pelagius. (2) Mary. In a long addition to the annotation on Luke 1:48 Erasmus, we have seen, defended his portrait of Mary in his paraphrase on the chapter as a woman of 'low estate,' chosen as the *theotokos* by God's favour, not by her own merits. In the annotation just observed on Romans 5:14, Erasmus had added to the witness of Pelagius a brief if somewhat ambiguous disavowal of the sinlessness of the Virgin. Few comments, however, are more indicative of Erasmus' criticism of the popular regard for Mary than his confession in the annotation on Luke 2:51 (*et erat subditus illis*) that he finds the view 'very harsh' that extends Mary's maternal authority over her son to the point that prayers to her are effective because she has authority to command her Son. (3) The Eucharist. In a lengthy addition to the annotation on 1 Corinthians 11:24 (*quod pro vobis tradetur*) Erasmus suggests that the words of institution in this passage may not have the significance attached to them if, as he thought possible, the contextual reference is not to the Eucharist but to the early Christian love feast.

In all of these passages Erasmus alludes to, rather than expounds, theological issues. Thus, while in the *1527* annotations Erasmus did not shrink from bringing forward important theological problems, the edition is not characterized by theological discussion. Even in addressing the theological

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1294 Cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 2* (Note 141) CWE 72 269. In *1516* the annotation on Rom 5:12 ('in whom [or, in which] all have sinned') was very brief (cf CWE 56 151 n2), that on Rom 5:14 ('unto the likeness') somewhat longer and concluded by lecturing the theologians to exercise caution in their consideration of the doctrine of original sin (cf CWE 56 167 n26).

1295 Cf *Elenchus in censuras Bedae*, *Divinationes ad notata Bedae*, and *Supputatio* ASD IX-5 respectively 186:502–6, 90:854–92:870, 522:279–92.

1296 Cf *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* CWE 82 208–10.

issues we have observed, his method continues to be essentially philological. He has kept in view the original aim of his New Testament scholarship.

### 5/ AUTHORITIES

The authorities to which Erasmus appealed in the fourth edition certainly invite attention. For the witness of biblical manuscripts Erasmus relied heavily on the volumes sent by Johann von Botzheim: two of the Epistles, one (possibly two) of the Gospels. There are, in fact, over two hundred references to them. These manuscripts arrived only at the later stages of Erasmus' preparation of the fourth edition, for Botzheim did not send the manuscripts of the Epistles to him until after 22 October 1526, and the manuscript(s) of the Gospels followed later.[1297] Of the two codices of the Epistles Erasmus repeatedly noted that one was older than the other, and though both had erasures, overwriting, and marginalia, it was the older one in which he had the greater trust, 'since the scribe was too ignorant to corrupt it.'[1298] Indeed, the scribe was so clumsy that he attempted 'to cram into the text of Titus 1:12–13 a marginal note previously added by a scholar, "He has taken the line from the poet Menes" (writing "Menes" for "Epimenides") – ridiculous to be sure but a solid demonstration for those who need the instruction that biblical manuscripts can be corrupted!'[1299] In addition to the codices from Constance, Erasmus in *1527* continues to speak in a general way about the 'Greek and Latin codices' and occasionally refers to other specific manuscripts: he cites a manuscript in St Martin's, Louvain, and even recalls the *codex aureus*, apparently either from memory or from notes he had taken in the summer of 1522 when it was available to him.[1300] He also cites the important witness of Codex Vaticanus on 1 John 5:7–8 sent to him by Paolo Bombace, too late evidently for the third edition.[1301] Erasmus continued to cite printed editions of Scripture as well: his own printed copy of the Vulgate and the Aldine Bible infrequently, but now for the first time the Complutensian Polyglot Bible,

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1297 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 289 with nn1229, 1230.

1298 Cf the annotation on 1 John 1:4 (*ut gaudeatis*).

1299 Cf the *1527* addition (paraphrased here) to the annotation on Titus 1:12 (*ventris pigri*) ASD VI-10 188:196–201.

1300 For the St Martin's manuscript see the annotation on John 7:8 (*ego enim non ascendam*); for references to the *codex aureus*, the annotation on Mark 3:29 (*non habebit remissionem*) and Mark 4:24 (*videte quid audiatis*).

1301 Cf n1291 above. But for his later devaluation of Codex Vaticanus in his correspondence with Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda see 'New Testament Scholarship' 345 with n1486.

which he calls the 'Spanish Bible,' in circulation by 1522. He cites it occasionally in the annotations on the Gospels and Acts, quite frequently in the still relatively few annotations on Revelation.[1302] In *1527* Erasmus refers also to a printed Bible in his possession, which already in his *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* (1525) he had described as 'some sixty years old.'[1303]

As in *1522*, so now the medieval exegetes play a relatively minor role in the annotations. The *Gloss* finds a significant place in the annotations on Acts, Bede is cited several times in those on the Catholic Epistles, and very infrequently Erasmus cites from the *Gloss* on the Gospels. Thomas Aquinas appears mainly in his great *Catena aurea*, a large collection of citations from patristic and medieval exegetes on the Gospels. The implicit recognition of the value of such medieval collections as the *Gloss* and the *Catena aurea* is a significant development of the third and fourth editions.

The fourth edition reflects also new literary wealth available from the rapidly developing increase in both patristic editions published and patristic manuscripts discovered. In 1521 Beatus Rhenanus had published the *editio princeps* of Tertullian's *Opera*. Erasmus himself had, as we have seen, made considerable progress in what became his great series of patristic editions. He published Cyprian in 1520, Hilary in1523, Irenaeus in 1526, and several works of Chrysostom between 1525 and 1527.[1304] However, the richness provided by these new patristic publications lay more in the variety and breadth of witness than in the extent of their use. In fact, none of them proved to be a major source of citations for the fourth edition of the New Testament. When Erasmus cited them, it was primarily for their value as witnesses to the biblical text, its language or its sentence construction, or as examples of translation – of the latter, even Irenaeus, or as Erasmus was to acknowledge, his translator, had value. Indeed, Erasmus observes that the earliest translators tended to represent in Latin the 'figures' conveyed by the Greek expression,

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1302 On this Bible and its influence on the text of Rev 22:16b–21 see 'New Testament Scholarship' 296 with n1253.

1303 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 277 with n1166.

1304 Erasmus also published a second edition of Jerome in 1524 (with a final volume in 1526), and in late 1527 the first volumes of the *Opera* of Augustine would see the light of day, a series completed in 1529; for a more detailed account of the publication of the works of Augustine see 'New Testament Scholarship' 326–7 with n1391. On Erasmus' use of Beatus' edition of Tertullian see 212 with n817; and for an evaluation of Tertullian see *Ratio* 695 with n1077.

thus giving their work a special place among translations.[1305] Yet none of these editions receives more than three dozen citations in the *1527* additions to the annotations. Although Erasmus had drawn heavily in the first edition from Hilary's commentary on Matthew, in the fourth edition he cited most frequently the *De Trinitate.* Beatus Rhenanus' edition of Tertullian included twenty-two of the thirty-one extant works, but Erasmus cited only five, most frequently the *Adversus Marcionem* and the *De resurrectione mortuorum*.[1306] Pseudo-Jerome (Pelagius) had been published in Froben's 1516 edition of Jerome, and Erasmus now in *1527* called upon him as well, though infrequently.[1307]

Among the authors that had become standard sources for Erasmus' work on the annotations, one may be surprised at the minimal role played in *1527* by Origen and Ambrosiaster. Apart from his commentaries on Matthew and Ephesians, citations from Jerome are limited. As in *1522*, so in *1527* the wide range of works of Augustine so impressively displayed in *1519* has been remarkably narrowed, as only a few works receive multiple citations: *Sermon on the Mount*, *Harmonization of the Gospels*, *Tractates* on the Gospel and on the Epistles of John, and the *De doctrina christiana*. Cyril's commentary on John is also cited several times. But what is most remarkable in the referencing of the Fathers in *1527* is the exuberance with which Chrysosotom and Theophylact meet the reader. Theophylact, whom Erasmus regarded highly but whose commentaries were virtually absent in *1522* from the annotations on the Gospels, is referenced in *1527* just under one hundred times in the annotations on the Gospels and well over two hundred times throughout all the annotations. The new availability of the Greek manuscripts of the homilies of Chrysostom on Acts, Romans, and 2 Corinthians brought Chrysostom into prominence: half of the approximately one hundred references in *1527* to this Greek homilist are found in the annotations on these three books.

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1305 Cf the annotation on Heb 13:2 (*placuerunt quidam etc*). Erasmus characterizes these early translators as *prisci scriptores christiani* 'primitive Christian writers' ASD VI-10 372:740. In *1535* Erasmus briefly qualified his *1527* inclusion of Irenaeus among Latin writers by adding to the name of Irenaeus the words 'or his translator' ibidem 372:741; Irenaeus' writings were extant only in Latin translation.

1306 Additional references are to *De monogamia*, *De carne Christi*, and *Adversus Praxean*. For Tertullian see also *Ratio* n121.

1307 For Pseudo-Jerome as Pelagius edited in the 1516 *Opera* of Jerome see CWE 56 155 n22.

We have already noted the pleasure Erasmus took in this edition in explicating the style of Paul. For the large passages of stylistic analysis he had drawn heavily on the *De doctrina christiana* of Augustine. He found in Chrysostom, too, a keen interest in the stylistic analysis of biblical prose.[1308] But Erasmus was also able to make patristic authors enhance his own prose in the annotations, particularly when a passage is quoted at length. Even when he marks their beginning and end, the longer patristic citations flow into his own prose, enhancing the imagery, enriching the texture of the language, sometimes adding drama to the annotation. Thus in *1527* Erasmus added to the annotation on Romans 1:32 ('who though [they knew] the righteousness of God') a long quotation from Chrysostom in which the address of the 'Golden mouth' to his early Christian audience confronts the modern reader of the annotation with the drama felt in the moral urgency of the ancient Christian preacher: '… what reason do you have to say, "I do not know what should be done"? You certainly knew very well. You are at fault …'[1309] The passage from Tertullian (noted above) that Erasmus quoted to support his observation about the character of apostolic speech referring to the Trinity brightens the prose of the annotation with the memorable imagery of the sun and its ray, startling in its suggestive recollection here of the words of the Creed – light from light, true God from true God;[1310] and in the discussion of original sin in the annotation on Romans 5:14 ('unto the likeness') the voice of Pseudo-Jerome is heard in virtual unison with that of Erasmus.[1311]

## XI THE LAST YEARS AND FINAL REVISIONS (1529–36)

Freiburg, the city in Hapsburg-ruled Breisgau to which Erasmus moved in April 1529, remained his permanent abode until just over a year before his death. He would return to Basel in the early summer of 1535 to be at the Froben Press when his *Ecclesiastes* was being printed. Once there, he decided not to return to Freiburg, and he remained in Basel until his death on

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1308 Cf eg the annotation on 2 Cor 4:17 (*quod in praesenti est momentaneum et leve*), cited in n1272 above.

1309 Cf CWE 56 68.

1310 Cf the annotation on Rom 1:7 ('from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ') CWE 56 32 and 309 with n1289 above.

1311 Cf CWE 56 164 (cf n20).

12 July 1536. During these last years Erasmus' correspondence tells the story of his remarkable productivity in spite of declining health and the weakness of advancing age. His letters reveal also his growing susceptibility to fear and insecurity, and an increasing inclination to suspicion. They recreate for us his frequently frightened and disenchanted perception of the political events that went far to transform the European world. Surprisingly, they offer few clues to the progress of his New Testament scholarship. We may regret this particularly because the revision of his *Paraphrases* in 1532 (Epistles) and 1534 (Gospels), and the publication of the fifth edition of his New Testament in March of 1535 must be regarded as significant achievements. In the letters of his last years matters other than his New Testament work are his dominating concern: the changing world of politics and religion, the religious controversies in which he was engaged, the conflicts arising from his continuing struggle for *bonae litterae*, and the high demand placed upon him to produce the literature of Christian piety.

**The Politico-Religious Crises: Erasmian Perceptions**

From his correspondence one gathers that Erasmus lived his last years in almost perpetual dread of war, with only a few glimmers of hope for peace; at the same time, he was being forced to give reluctant and regretful recognition to the possibility of the dissolution of the religious solidarity of Europe. While the hostilities of the 1520s between Charles and Francis, and of the late 1520s between Charles and the pope had been resolved by the treaties respectively of Cambrai in August 1529 and of Barcelona in June earlier in the same year,[1312] the threat of war that derived from the ever-encroaching power of the Turks was felt by Erasmus as immediate and severe. Among the German states the reform movement was gaining ground, and its adherents were becoming increasingly aggressive in the face of the power of the Catholic emperor. In the autumn of 1529 the Turks, to the consternation of the West, advanced to the walls of Vienna; to the great surprise of Christendom the siege was lifted, and the Turkish army retreated.[1313] This did not prevent

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1312 Cf Ep 2207:9–15 (20 August 1529) with n5 and Ep 2269:71–83 with n12 (3 February 1530).

1313 See Ep 2261:19–42 for Erasmus' rapid account of his awareness on 31 January 1530 of the state of affairs in Europe; his brief statement that Vienna had fallen was based on a false report. For Erasmus on the Turkish menace see 'New Testament Scholarship' 258 with nn1062, 1063.

the Turks from subsequent raids and invasions of parts of Hungary. After the death of King Louis in 1526 at the battle of Mohács against the Turks, a struggle for the vacant throne arose between Ferdinand, Erasmus' prince, and John Zápolyai, the nobleman who was supported by some of Erasmus' closest Polish friends.[1314] In England, Henry VIII had begun to take steps by 1529 that would later, particularly by the Act of Submission of the Clergy (1532) and the Act of Succession (1534), lead to the separation of the church of England from the church of Rome and, by the first Act, to the resignation of Thomas More as chancellor, by the second to his death, and thus to the loss of one of Erasmus' closest English friends.[1315]

Having made peace with Francis I and Clement VII, Charles V, in July 1529, departed from Spain, where he had resided since 1522 when he had left Brabant for his Spanish throne. The emperor spent the winter of 1529–30 in Italy. He arrived in Bologna on 5 November, kissed the pope's feet, and on 24 February was crowned Holy Roman emperor by the pope – the last Holy Roman emperor to be thus crowned.[1316] In Bologna he summoned the diet to meet at Augsburg on 8 April 1530 and on 22 March set out for Germany. The correspondence of Erasmus offers some informative glimpses into the emperor's progress from Italy to Germany.[1317] While some of Erasmus' correspondents expressed the hope that peace in Germany could be restored without bloodshed, the predominant mood was one of fear.[1318]

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1314 Cf Ep 2384:37–47 (10 September 1530) and Ep 2409:1–22 (19 November 1530); also Epp 2211:20–46 (5 September 1529) and 1810 n8. The struggle between Ferdinand and Zápolyai for the Hungarian throne, with the significance of the hostilities for Erasmus, is briefly outlined above, 'New Testament Scholarship' 258 with n1064.

1315 Cf CEBR II 456–8, Epp 2256:39–63 (16 January 1530) and 2211:32–56 with n14 (to Thomas More, 5 September 1529); also Allen Ep 2915:11–32 (12 March 1534).

1316 For Charles' arrival in Bologna see Epp 2240:13–16 with n8 and 2261:19–23; for the date of the coronation see James D. Tracy *Emperor Charles* V, *Impresario of War: Campaign Strategy, International Finance and Domestic Politics* (Cambridge 2002) 121. For Charles' departure from Brabant in 1522 see 'New Testament Scholarship' 214 with nn828, 829.

1317 Cf Vives' letter to Erasmus, Ep 2208:45–52 (30 August 1529) and Erasmus' letter to Haio Herman (31 January 1530), Ep 2261:29–32 with n6.

1318 Cf eg Johann Koler of Augsburg, who on 3 February 1530 (Ep 2269:47–70) expresses full confidence in Charles to settle affairs peacefully in Germany as he had done in Italy: 'There is no reason, my dear Erasmus, to despair.' For the turbulence and the widespread apprehension in anticipation of Charles' arrival at the diet (on 15 June) see the letter of Johann von Botzheim, Ep 2310:38–56 (13 April 1530).

In August Erasmus observed that Charles sought to frighten his adversaries by threatening war, and added, 'My heart shudders every time I contemplate the shape of things as I see them if ever we resort to arms.'[1319] For Erasmus much more was at stake at the Diet of Augsburg than a decision on the validity of the Lutheran confession.

Erasmus was not only filled with apprehension about the outcome of the diet but also suffered a certain implied opprobrium from others who thought he should be there. 'Many [from the diet] wrote to me saying, "Would that you were here."' To this Erasmus responded succinctly, 'No one ordered me in the emperor's name to be there.'[1320] A month earlier he had explained his absence with the same excuse but with a protective caveat: he was too sick to go to Augsburg – he had in fact been sick for three months – and, as though to prove it, described at great length the symptoms and some of the attempted cures more painful than purgatory.[1321] In another letter written about the same time (9 July), he added that he could do no good there and implied that if he were there, he would be called a Lutheran.[1322] Nicolaus Olahus thought otherwise: Erasmus' presence was necessary, he insisted, his judgment would be effective, and if he would not come at the instigation of friends, he should do so for the sake of public peace.[1323] Erasmus remained obdurate to the end.

The Diet of Augsburg drew to a close without a resolution of the religious problem.[1324] Charles went to Brabant, where his sister, Mary, widow of Louis II of Hungary, had been appointed regent in 1530.[1325] From Brabant Charles summoned another diet before returning to Spain. Initially it was to have met at Speyer, but it was later transferred to Regensburg to begin on

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1319 Ep 2366:8–11; cf Ep 2365:3–13. A letter from Johannes Fabri attempted to quell Erasmus' fears (cf Ep 2374), but even at the end of November Erasmus wished for, more than hoped for, the peace of the church (Ep 2411:3–15). In December Erasmus was still afraid of war: 'If war breaks out here [Freiburg], I have to flee' Ep 2412:17–18.

1320 Ep 2365:16–17 (17 August 1530)

1321 Cf Epp 2353A:44–72 and 2344:8–16. See CWE 16 xiv–xv and 410–11 for a description of the symptoms and an attempted diagnosis of the disease.

1322 Cf Ep 2347:4–11.

1323 Cf Ep 2339:16–22 and n6.

1324 Cf Ep 2413:30–2. The diet remained in session until 19 November; cf ibidem n10.

1325 For Charles in Brabant and for his achievements there see Allen Epp 2516:11–30, 2573:51–6, and 2583:15–28.

17 April 1532.[1326] It concluded on 3 August with a *modus vivendi* established between the emperor and the German princes.[1327] But if the diet averted the war Erasmus so much feared,[1328] reports of other events, many quite terrifying, continued to harass him. In his correspondence, stories of war with the Turkish armies – sometimes with details of horrifying cruelty[1329] – alternate with expressions of hope for a truce. In spite of a signal defeat of the Turkish army in August 1532, a lasting peace, though not entirely advantageous to Charles, was finally established in 1533.[1330] But there was still much unrest in Europe. In November 1533 Erasmus relayed reports of widespread fires: in Antwerp, Cologne, Kulm, villages in Switzerland, and in Schiltach, a town near Freiburg, about which he added the rumour that the fire was set at the instigation of a demon.[1331] Such events, Erasmus noted, did not seem to him at all accidental.[1332] A vigilant bishop prevented rioters from assuming control in Münster, but only temporarily. In 1534 Philip of Hesse, a convinced Protestant, replaced by force the Hapsburg regency in Württemberg and restored Ulrich, who had been driven out in 1520.[1333] As Freiburg was a Hapsburg domain, troops were levied in the city in 1534 to support the war. Erasmus' friend Johann Koler wrote sympathetically: 'I cannot say, dear Erasmus, how concerned I was for you in this unrest, for we are constantly receiving news that your city was filled with military recruits and turmoil, and that the prince of Hesse might attack.'[1334] The troubles in Münster were followed by the occupation of the city in 1534 by Anabaptists. The city was not restored until the decisive defeat of the occupants in June 1535. Erasmus received several reports of the truly horrifying events concomitant with its blockade and capture.[1335] Tielmannus Gravius wrote to

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1326 Cf Allen Ep 2511:43 with 43n.
1327 Cf Allen Epp 2702:4–10 and 2713:21–3.
1328 Erasmus' fears were expressed early in 1532 in the 'impassioned rhetoric' of his *Precatio pro pace ecclesiae*; cf CWE 69 110 and Allen Ep 2618 (5 March 1532).
1329 Cf eg Ep 2396 (October 1530).
1330 Cf Allen Ep 2787:7–10 with 9n (4 April 1533), 2797:18–24 (21 April 1533), 2825:9–11 (20 June 1533), and 2861:30–4 (25 August 1533).
1331 Cf Allen Ep 2877:9–17; for the report about Schiltach see Allen Ep 2846:124–52.
1332 Cf Allen Ep 2877:16–17.
1333 For Münster see Allen Ep 2957:22–4; for Württemberg see Allen Ep 3000:32–5 and CEBR II 188–9 and III 464–5.
1334 Cf Allen Ep 2947:9–12 with n12.
1335 For the accounts of the events see Allen Epp 2957, 2999, 3031, and 3031A. By the time Erasmus had received Ep 3031 (July 1535), he had returned to Basel.

Erasmus that Anabaptists were in force in Lower Germany; one of them in Friesland, who thought he was Christ, was captured, another was caught and burned alive on the order of the archbishop.[1336] Conradus Goclenius in Louvain reported that in Holland the madness was so widespread that no one could trust the guards.[1337]

From Johann Koler Erasmus received a report of the event of the 'Placards' in France. On the night of 17–18 October 1534 placards had been posted in Paris and some other cities condemning the 'pompous and proud Mass that will destroy the world … since it outrageously blasphemes our Saviour.'[1338] Action was taken against the leaders; more than twenty-four were executed.[1339] Writing on 10 December 1534 Koler reported in disturbing detail what he had heard: Francis had determined to extirpate Lutheranism and so had already made an example of some of those who had been arrested: 'Some, their tongues cut out, enclosed alive in iron cages, were roasted with torches from behind and put to death after a long torture.'[1340] In England the events in which Thomas More played such a prominent part were particularly difficult for Erasmus to evaluate. After More's resignation, Erasmus was inclined to defend Henry VIII. In fact, Erasmus preferred not to declare himself on the question of the divorce. Writing to Erasmus in June 1533 Damião de Gois confessed that he was confused: in Freiburg he had heard Erasmus speak against the divorce, in Louvain it was said that Erasmus approved the divorce. Would Erasmus state clearly his position?[1341] Erasmus replied a month later: no one had ever heard him say a word one way or the other about the divorce. It would be simply rash for him to pronounce on a subject on which legal experts hesitated. He owed much to the king; he respected the queen, and to Charles, the queen's nephew, he was bound as councillor to give his support. Two years ago envoys came to him to ask for his opinion; he was unable to give an opinion, and they left. That he, Erasmus, published two books at the request of Anne Boleyn's father signified nothing about

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1336 Cf Allen Ep 2990:14–26 (3 February 1535).
1337 Cf Allen 2998:14–26 (25 February 1535).
1338 Cited from *La correspondence d'Erasme* ed and trans Marie Delcourt and Hendrik Vannerom, rev by Alois Gerlo, 12 vols (Brussels 1982) 11 81 n7 (cf Allen Ep 2983:48n, where the event is dated 17–18 November).
1339 Cf Allen Epp 2983:48–54 with 48n, and 3029:84–94.
1340 Allen Ep 2983:50–2. Cf the vivid description of the punishments in the letter of Bartholomaeus Latomus to Erasmus, Allen Ep 3029:84–94 (29 June 1535).
1341 Cf Allen Ep 2826:20–30.

the divorce[1342] – he had, after all, dedicated *Paraphrases* to both Charles and Francis when they were at war with one another.[1343]

**Declining Health and Psychological Distress**

If, however, Erasmus' last years were filled with anxiety from the circumambient political and religious events, he suffered perhaps even more distress from very personal circumstances in his own life. He became increasingly subject to sickness. As we have seen, he gave his sickness in 1530 as an incontrovertible excuse for refusing to attend the Diet of Augsburg.[1344] The sickness was, in fact, real and severe. Early in 1531 he acknowledged in more than one letter that, due to his sickness, the previous year (1530) had not been a productive one for him.[1345] From the beginning of 1533 his letters speak with increasing frequency of his illness. He complained to Johann Henckel that in February 1533 he had been attacked by a disease that moved through his whole body with sometimes unbearable pain.[1346] By June he was so sick he had to send visitors away.[1347] In October and November of 1534 'gout' prevented him on many days from writing at all, precisely when he was trying to finish the *Ecclesiastes*.[1348] In December of 1535 he was confined to his bed suffering from ulceration at the end of his spine,[1349] and in March of 1536 he could keep nothing in his stomach.[1350] On 6 June he recognized that he was a dying man, confined to his bed, 'compelled to renounce all those studies without which life can have no charm for me.'[1351] It is astonishing that, in spite of his sickness, Erasmus continued his work almost to the end.

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1342 Erasmus had dedicated to Thomas Boleyn *In psalmum 22* and his *Explanatio symboli*, respectively in February 1530 (Ep 2266) and March 1533 (Allen Ep 2772).

1343 Cf Allen Ep 2846:39–95. For the various opinions Erasmus expressed on the subject of Henry's divorce see Allen Ep 2846 introduction, where Allen points to Ep 3001 (March 1535) in which Erasmus concedes that if he had had at hand a full knowledge of the case as his correspondent Johannes Cochlaeus had presented it, he 'would have dared to dissuade the king from the divorce' (Allen Ep 3001:16–17).

1344 Cf 317 with n1321 above.

1345 Cf eg Epp 2442:2–10 (6 March 1531) and 2457:13–15 (17 March 1531).

1346 Cf Allen Ep 2783:15–23.

1347 Cf Allen Ep 2818:1–14.

1348 Cf Allen Epp 2976:13–14, 2979, and for a description of the symptoms 2906:92–100 (19 February 1534).

1349 Cf Allen Ep 3077.

1350 Cf Allen Ep 3106:11–13.

1351 Cf Allen Ep 3126:2–5. Erasmus died about five weeks later, on 12 July 1536.

Concomitant with Erasmus' slowly deteriorating physical condition was a decreasing ability to curb his tendency to suspicion. From 1530 Erasmus' letters reveal a continuing concern – sometimes, it would seem, even an obsession – with the pensions owed to him as councillor of Charles and as a canon of Courtrai. Erasmus held Pierre Barbier, once his good friend, responsible for the payment of the latter pension. When the full payment was not regularly made, Erasmus began to accuse Barbier of dishonesty. By 1534 suspicion led to denigration of character: 'Now Barbier arrogantly thumbs his nose at me.'[1352] After his move to Freiburg he often expressed the desire to return to Brabant, but by 1534 he was so suspicious of the power and hostility of the Franciscans in Louvain that he found the assurances of safety from both the emperor and Mary, the regent, inadequate.[1353] He came to suspect a *famulus*, Quirinus Hagius, who had evidently done him good service, not only of cheating him of his English pension but also of acting as a fifth columnist on behalf of his enemies, insinuating himself into Erasmus' house to discover the secrets with which his enemies could destroy him.[1354] But no one was so deeply, so consistently, and so pathologically suspected in these years as Girolamo Aleandro. At one point Erasmus suspected that Aleandro, along with Latomus, was the motivating force behind Barbier's dishonesty.[1355] During these years, Erasmus' *Ciceronianus*, published in 1528,[1356] was the object of complaints from those who felt slighted, the object of hostility from those who opposed his position.[1357] Julius Caesar Scaliger and Etienne Dolet both published unflattering works that aimed at Erasmus and the views he had expressed in the work.[1358] Pietro Corsi saw in one of Erasmus'

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1352 Cf Allen Ep 2965:15. Allen Ep 2961:53–81, Ep 2403:1–36, and Ep 2404 with the notes shed light on the background of the complicated arrangements for payment of Erasmus' pensions; cf also CEBR I 93–4.

1353 Cf Allen Epp 2899 and 2961:39–52.

1354 Cf Allen Ep 2940:6–12 with 6n and the reference to Allen Epp 2704 introduction and 2944:11–21. Cf also CEBR III 127 on Quirinus Hagius.

1355 Cf Allen Ep 2799:26–30 (April 1533).

1356 A revised edition was published in early 1529; cf Ep 2088 introduction.

1357 For Erasmus' position and the reaction to it see the introduction to the translation of the work in CWE 28 324–36, especially 328–9.

1358 J-C Scaliger *Iulii Scaligeri oratio pro Tullio Cicerone contra Des Erasmum Roterodamum* (Paris: G. Gourmont and P. Vidoue 1531); Etienne Dolet *Dialogus de imitatione Ciceroniana adversus Desiderium Erasmum Roterodamum pro Christophoro Longolio* (Lyons: S. Gryphius 1535); cf Allen Ep 3005.

adages a signal contempt for Italians and produced a work against him.[1359] Erasmus believed that Aleandro had inspired them all. Indeed, he thought Aleandro had actually written Scaliger's *Oratio* – 'I am as certain of this as I am certain I am alive' – though he thought his old enemy Béda could have added some poison, and a former roommate Giulio Camillo might have helped.[1360] Erasmus seems to have carried his vitriolic suspicion of Aleandro to his deathbed. A month before he died, he again imputed to Aleandro the spate of books that had appeared against him, describing Aleandro as a man 'eminently impious and wicked.'[1361]

Erasmus' last years were also marked by an anguished loneliness, fed not merely by the death of good friends[1362] but also by the sense of hostility surrounding him. He felt betrayed by the Evangelicals: he believed that men like Pellicanus and Geldenhouwer had used his *Paraphrases* and *Annotations* to suggest that he supported their views. In 1531 he spoke of such people as 'men who hide under the name of "gospel,"' 'who have broken all laws human and divine, and believe that anything that comes into their head is sacred.'[1363] It must not go unnoticed, however, that in November 1535 Pellicanus wrote a letter seeking reconciliation and was received by Erasmus for a short visit on 25 June 1536, only days before he died.[1364] In several letters Erasmus divides his world between his friends and his enemies. He wrote to William Blount that there were 'vipers everywhere'; 'This is plainly my fate: I am either loved or feared by the great. I am assailed by dogs and bedbugs.'[1365] To Agostino Trivulzio he confessed that he had made enemies of almost all scholars, and those who had been his most intimate friends he now saw as

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1359 *Defensio pro Italia ad Erasmum Roterodamum* (Rome: A. Bladus 1535). Corsi objected to the implication in *Adagia* II i 7 ('Myconian baldpate') that Italians were unwarlike; cf Allen Ep 3007:54n and CEBR I 344 where it is said that 'if it were not for his controversy with Erasmus, Corsi might today be largely forgotten.'

1360 Cf Allen Ep 2736:1–7 with 5n (5 November 1532) and CEBR I 248–9 for Camillo.

1361 Cf Allen Ep 3127:40–50 with 40n. Letters from Aleandro himself and from François Rabelais could not dissolve Erasmus' suspicion; cf Allen Epp 2638 and 2639 (Aleandro), and 2743 (Rabelais).

1362 For the loss of friends by death see eg Allen Epp 2798:10–17 (23 April 1533) and 3019:11–19 (21 May 1535).

1363 Cf Allen Ep 2486:10–12 (16 April 1531) and the candid letter to Martin Bucer (2 March 1532), Allen Ep 2615. For Erasmus' sense of a hostile world see Allen Ep 2615:60–71.

1364 Cf Allen Ep 3072 and Ep 1637 introduction. For the hostility between Erasmus and Pellicanus see 'New Testament Scholarship' 286 with n1212.

1365 Cf Ep 2459:27–34 (18 March 1531).

mortal enemies.[1366] To Johann (II) Paumgartner, a relatively new friend, he observed that 'these days few friends are true friends.'[1367] If Nicolas Maillard credited the hostility to Erasmus' support for the humanities, Erasmus himself thought the matter more complex. To Giambattista Egnazio he wrote that there was a time when few others could claim so many friends. It was the religious conflict, arising at the very moment when he, Erasmus, had become the standard bearer for the humanities, that transformed his world; for those who opposed the sects believed that the sects could not be eradicated without eradicating the humanities.[1368]

But Erasmus seems to have regretted the loss of no friendship so much as that of Guillaume Budé. Erasmus had praised, even flattered, Budé in the first edition of the New Testament.[1369] The two had maintained a correspondence, friendly if occasionally acerbic, until 1528, when Budé took exception to Erasmus' unflattering characterization of him in the *Ciceronianus*. From that point Budé ceased to correspond with Erasmus. In a long letter, dated 5 September 1530, Erasmus spoke frankly to his friend and colleague, Germain de Brie, about the affair. He insisted that he always had been and always would be a friend of Budé. He regretted that mutual friends had not attempted reconciliation between the two. He would like to have been named, if only by a word, in Budé's recent book in order to quell suspicions that enmity had arisen between them.[1370] Six months later, writing to Jacques Toussain, Erasmus insisted that there was no need of 'reconciliation' since Budé could not have been offended by the *Ciceronianus*; and if he had a complaint, it was for him to write to Erasmus and for Erasmus to respond. But Budé clearly had been offended. In fact, according to Toussain, Budé had not even opened two letters Erasmus had written in the preceding two years.[1371]

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1366 Cf Allen Ep 2482:35–7 (12 April 1531).

1367 Cf Allen Ep 2621:8 (7 March 1532).

1368 For the comments of Nicolas Maillard see Ep 2424:162–74 (1 February 1531); for Erasmus' complaint to Giambattista Egnazio, Ep 2448:19–69 (13 March 1531).

1369 Cf the annotation on Luke 1:4 (*eruditus es veritatem* in *1516–27*) and 'New Testament Scholarship' 76.

1370 For Budé in the *Ciceronianus* see CWE 28 420–1 with n676. For the letter to Brie see Ep 2379:161–463, and especially 281–324 for Erasmus' wish to be named in Budé's book. Budé had published in 1529 *Commentarii linguae Graecae*. In 1527 Erasmus had explicitly expressed to Budé his wish that Budé would mention him in some of his writings, 'for some indication of your good will, for there are people who suspect you of less than friendly feelings towards me'; cf Ep 1794:16–24 and 'New Testament Scholarship' 371 with n1601.

1371 Cf Ep 2449:44–73; and for the unopened letters see ibidem 68–70 with n7.

Good relations between Erasmus and Budé were never resumed, and in his last edition of the *Annotations* Erasmus eliminated the tribute to Budé in the annotation on Luke 1:4.

**Erasmus, Christian Humanist to the End**

This rather bleak picture of the physical and psychological condition of Erasmus in his last years might suggest an inevitable decrease in intellectual energy. Of this there is virtually no indication, though physical illness sometimes prevented him from work.[1372] His contributions to the New Testament scholarship during this period constitute a significant achievement: important revisions to the *Paraphrases*; some notable developments in the *Annotations*, which he claimed cost him much labour;[1373] and important ancillary discussions on New Testament problems in correspondence with younger scholars, who were prepared to challenge his scholarship on fairly specific points. Even so, it is unlikely that the New Testament scholarship absorbed more than a relatively small portion of his intellectual energy in these last years. In fact, Erasmus devoted much of his attention during this time to literary efforts that were explicitly humanistic. His work on the New Testament had not become alien to these efforts, for while, in his final edition of the New Testament, he addressed issues arising from the criticism of theologians, his New Testament scholarship never lost its fundamental character as a humanist philological work. A brief survey of some of the work undertaken in this period forces into sharp relief the image of the elderly Erasmus as the humanist he always was.[1374]

New editions of works that had marked him out as a humanist in his earlier years continued to be published with additions: the *Colloquies*, the *Adagia*, the *Moria*.[1375] These years saw a considerable investment of time in pedagogical works. In 1529 he 'restored and completed' a treatise written many years before while in Italy, the *De pueris instituendis*, 'a Christian

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1372 See 'New Testament Scholarship' 329 with n1410 for Erasmus' bold statement of his continuing intellectual vigour.

1373 Cf Allen Ep 2951:12–14.

1374 The letter of Giovanni Angelo Odoni provides an eloquent if somewhat fulsome witness to the regard for Erasmus as the embodiment of Christian humanism, even as late as 1535; cf Allen Ep 3002:178–246 and CEBR III 23–4.

1375 New editions of the *Colloquies* were published in 1529, 1531, 1533, of the *Adagia* in 1530, 1533, 1536, and an edition of the *Moria* in 1532.

humanist reformulation of the classical ideal of a liberal education …'[1376] In the September 1529 edition of the *Colloquies* a new colloquy 'The Art of Learning' appeared, 'intended for all young students of language and literature.'[1377] In 1530 he published an epitome of Valla's *Elegantiae*, a handbook of proper Latin. This too was a revision of one of his most youthful works, revised and published now to prevent the proliferation of an unauthorized edition that had begun to appear. It was a pedagogical tool, revised so that it could be put 'into the hands of the young boys in a more correct version.'[1378] During the same year he published a translation of Xenophon's *Hieron* with a long letter to Pieter Gillis attached that included an important philological discussion of the language of perception in the New Testament – a reflection of Titelmans' critique.[1379] In the spring of 1531 he dedicated an entirely new work, the *Apophthegmata*, to the young prince William of Cleves, written, however, not only for him but for all young people 'who are engaged in liberal studies.'[1380] A second edition with two books added was published in September 1532.[1381] Earlier in 1532 came an edition of the comedies of Terence, dedicated to Jan and Stanisław Boner, young sons of an émigré from the Palatinate to Cracow, Poland. The edition was dedicated to these boys as a contribution to their education: 'Nothing is better for a person than piety, the seeds of which must be planted in earliest youth, but the liberal disciplines take next place …'[1382] For the civilizing power of education, Erasmus assures the boys, Terence is supremely useful; to read the comedies is to delight the intellect, to refine one's expression, and to discover the moral philosophy that promises happiness in life.[1383] In 1534 Erasmus published new editions of the *De conscribendis epistolis* with minor revisions and the *De copia* with major additions.[1384]

The image of Erasmus as now the grand old man of humanism encouraged both scholars and publishers to seek to attach his name to their

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1376 Cf CWE 26 292–3.
1377 CWE 40 931
1378 Ep 2416:38–9. For the history of the work see Epp 2416, 2260:70–121, and ASD I-4 191–9.
1379 Cf Ep 2260:135–326 with n27. For Titelmans see 'New Testament Scholarship' 333–5, especially 335 with n1439.
1380 Cf CWE 37 8 and Ep 2431:80–1.
1381 Cf CWE 38 763–4 with n6 and Allen Ep 2711.
1382 Cf the dedicatory letter, Allen Ep 2584:3–6. For the Boner family and its relation to Erasmus see CEBR I 166–8 and Allen Ep 2533.
1383 Cf Allen Ep 2584:62–89.
1384 Cf CWE 25 6, CWE 24 282.

publications. In 1531 Erasmus accommodated Simon Grynaeus by writing a preface for the latter's edition of Aristotle in Greek; he wrote a preface also for Grynaeus' edition of Livy.[1385] In 1532 he acceded somewhat reluctantly to the request of the publisher Johann Herwagen to write a preface for an edition of the Greek Demosthenes.[1386] When the same Herwagen sought Erasmus' collaboration for his monumental edition of Cicero, Erasmus offered minimal advice but refused to write a preface.[1387] He did, however, write the preface for the Greek text of Ptolemy's *Geography*, published by Froben-Episcopius in 1533. Consulted by Johannes Agricola in the preparation of a text of Galen, Erasmus, too pressed to write much, responded with a few notes that served as a preface to that publication – also in 1533. Erasmus took the occasion of these prefaces to restate the important presuppositions of humanism: liberal education enables us not only to live well but to live happily;[1388] we mine the earth for gold neglecting the treasures of intellect, but much more precious, more important is the soul than the body; for those who wish to learn the languages, the charm and complexity of Demosthenes, like that of Cicero, is better adapted for advanced students; those who direct liberal education should take account of the value of geography, for those who neglect geography will often go astray in reading good authors – a sentiment expressed long before in the *Ratio* and consistently applied in the New Testament scholarship.[1389]

From an early point, editions as well as translations of the church Fathers had been central in Erasmus' conception of humanism understood as an instrument for the restoration of true and genuine Christianity. To this his edition of Jerome witnesses. During the decade preceding his move to Freiburg, he had produced editions of the *Opera* of Cyprian, Hilary, Irenaeus, Ambrose, and not only editions but also translations of individual works of Chrysostom. The immense labour invested in the preparation of the great ten-volume *Opera* of Augustine came to fruition with its publication in 1529. Printing had begun in 1527 just before the death of Johann Froben, who saw

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1385 Cf Epp 2432 (preface to Aristotle) and 2435 (preface to Livy, for the special circumstances of which, however, see Allen's introduction to the letter).

1386 Cf Allen Epp 2686:8–25 and 2695.

1387 Cf Allen Ep 2765:11–19 with 11n; for the 'minimal advice' see Allen Ep 2768:3–9.

1388 For this and the three commonplaces that follow see respectively: Epp 2432:18–21 (preface to Aristotle), 2435:61–5 (preface to Livy); Allen Epp 2695:32–55 (preface to Demosthenes), 2760:62–76 (preface to Ptolemy).

1389 Cf *Ratio* 501 with n58, and CWE 50 xi, xvi.

the first two volumes effectively completed;[1390] printing continued throughout 1528 and was completed in 1529.[1391]

More editions and translations of the Fathers were to follow, more frequently now as collaborative efforts with a lighter hand from Erasmus. In 1530 Erasmus published an edition of *De veritate corporis et sanguinis Dominici in eucharistia* by Alger,[1392] a twelfth-century instructor in Liège, and in the autumn of the same year the five-volume edition of Chrysostom in Latin. Publication of the Chrysostom was rushed, and the sixth volume did not appear until 1533.[1393] In 1531 Erasmus wrote the preface for an edition of Gregory of Nazianzus prepared by his recently deceased friend Willibald Pirckheimer.[1394] Basil the Great followed in 1532: the Greek text of the *Opera* appeared in March,[1395] as well as a translation of the *De laudibus ieiunii*, published separately, and somewhat later a translation of the *De spiritu sancto*.[1396] From the press in the spring of the following year came not only volume six of Chrysostom's *Opera* but also a translation of some of his homilies and an edition of a commentary on the Psalms by the ninth-century monk, abbot, and bishop Haymo.[1397] Later in the same year Chevallon in Paris published

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1390 Note the 'lamentation' or 'eulogy' for Froben in Ep 1900, especially 86–93 with n8.

1391 A first volume, heavily annotated by Juan Luis Vives, had been published in 1522. It was republished late in 1529 without the notes as vol 5 in the *Opera*; cf Epp 1309 introduction and 2208 n2. The colophon was placed on vols 1–7 (apart from vol 5) in 1528, on the remainder in 1529; cf Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* I 454 and Ep 2157 introduction. For the printing of the first two volumes in 1527 with the colophon placed in 1528 see Ep 1895A; and for a detailed account of the progress of the Augustine project from beginning to end see Allen Ep 2157 introduction; cf also 'New Testament Scholarship' 132 with n555.

1392 Ie 'On the Reality of the Body and Blood of the Lord in the Eucharist.' Cf Ep 2284.

1393 This five-volume Chrysostom represented by no means the work of only Erasmus, who provided some of the translations, while Germain de Brie and Oecolampadius provided others. Even the editorial work was evidently light, but it was no doubt advantageous to the publisher that the work should go out under Erasmus' name; cf Ep 2359 introduction (both Allen and CWE). Cf also the Translator's Note to the letter of Oecolampadius in 'Prefaces and Letters' 773.

1394 Cf Allen Ep 2493.

1395 But cf Allen Ep 2611 introduction: 'It would seem that Erasmus directed the enterprise … though he disclaims editorial responsibility.'

1396 For the translations of Basil's work on fasting and on the Holy Spirit see Allen Epp 2617 and 2643.

1397 For the homilies see Allen Ep 2774; for Haymo, Allen Ep 2771.

a third edition of the Jerome that had appeared with Froben first in 1516 and again in 1524–6. The *Opera* of Origen was published in 1536, but after Erasmus' death.[1398]

The preface to many of these publications reveal in a striking manner the degree to which Erasmus' vision of the Fathers in his programme of Christian humanism had remained firmly fixed throughout the years. Alger, he affirmed, represents the eloquence of the great men who shone before the time when the scholastics had stripped expression of the ornaments of style to produce a prose that was dry and passionless, whereas the explication of the mysteries requires a grandeur of style through which the author's passion is transmitted to the reader.[1399] The five-volume Chrysostom was presented to the reading public with a call to preachers to imitate not Thomas Aquinas or Duns Scotus but the 'Golden mouth,' to study the 'Christian philosophy,' and thus to nourish the people on the word of God, the source of true piety.[1400] In the preface to the Greek edition of Basil Erasmus introduces the Cappadocian as 'this Christian Demosthenes, or rather this celestial orator'; to read his work in the original Greek is to arouse a passion more powerful than our love for the charms of literature since it derives from the action of the Holy Spirit through the intermediary of this great author.[1401] Erasmus dedicated his translation of Basil's *De spiritu sancto* to Johannes Dantiscus, drawing a sharp contrast between human philosophy and the 'celestial philosophy that comes from the heart of the Father through the Son.'[1402] He offered some homilies of Chrysostom to Johann (II) Paumgartner with a laudation of the liberal arts and advice on the education of youth.[1403] The reader is given the second edition of the *Fragmentum commentariorum Origenis in evangelium secundum Matthaeum* with the observation that the fervour of its author is never more intense than when he expounds the words and deeds of Christ, while, of all the evangelists, Matthew most fully embraces the totality of the life and the teaching of Christ.[1404] The preface to Haymo is not unlike

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1398 Cf n1404 just below.
1399 Cf Ep 2284:36–64.
1400 Cf Ep 2359:69–83.
1401 Cf Allen Ep 2611:8–25.
1402 Cf Allen Ep 2643:121–42.
1403 Cf Allen Ep 2774:15–60.
1404 Cf Allen Ep 3131:9–13. This 'Fragment of Origen on Matthew' was originally published in 1527 (Ep 1844); the second edition was included in the *Opera* of Origen published posthumously (Basel: Froben-Episcopius September 1536); cf Allen Ep 3131 introduction and 'New Testament Scholarship' 373 with n1612.

the *Enchiridion* in its desire to portray the true nature of religious vocation.[1405] Thus, in these letters the images drawn of the eloquence of the Fathers, their celestial philosophy, and their passion inspired and inspiring invite the recollection of Erasmus' characterization in the *Methodus* and the *Ratio* of patristic literature as a 'golden stream' from which to draw when one approaches the study of the New Testament.

In his last years Erasmus' writings reflect a vision of his life as one that had at its centre the correlation of Christian faith with the liberal arts – an attempt to fuse together 'studies' and 'piety.' Hence in 1535, defending himself against the attack of Pietro Corsi, he wrote to Johann Koler retrospectively that in his early years he had written the *Enchiridion* 'in order to put *bonae litterae* in the service of piety.'[1406] In fact, in these last years Erasmus repeatedly links together 'studies' and 'piety,' and nowhere more effectively than in the praise of friends. In 1532 he praised the president of the Council of Holland for his support of 'liberal studies and authentic piety.'[1407] A few months later he portrayed Thomas More, now resigned from the chancellorship of England, as a man whose life had been from youth devoted to 'studies and piety.'[1408] But this complementary pair appears also in the context of less fortunate events: Erasmus fears that the debate on Ciceronianism will injure liberal studies in the same way the religious debates have marred piety.[1409]

In fact, the composition of 'works of piety' must have occupied a considerable portion of Erasmus' time during his final years, some of which are distinguished even among Erasmus' publications. Erasmus completed an exposition of five Psalms: Psalm 22, for Thomas Boleyn (1530); Psalm 33 (1531); Psalm 38 (1532);[1410] Psalm 83, the famous *De concordia* (1533);[1411] and last of all

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1405 Cf Allen Ep 2771.
1406 Cf Allen Ep 3032:467–8.
1407 Cf Allen Ep 2734:29–36.
1408 Cf Allen Ep 2750:161–5.
1409 Cf Ep 2249:3–6 (January 1530). Cf Allen Ep 2604:23–5 (8 February 1532), where Erasmus says that 'an evil spirit has brought a plague to studies as it had long ago to religion.'
1410 In dedicating this exposition to Stanislaus Thurzo, Erasmus observed that the bishop might well be astonished that in spite of ills and advancing old age 'this old man [Erasmus] no more than half alive can still hold the rudder on a straight course.' Cf CWE 65 10 (Allen Ep 2608:48–50) and 324 with n1372 above.
1411 This fundamental work 'On Mending the Peace of the Church' (*De sarcienda ecclesiae concordia*) reflects Erasmus' continuing concern in these years for negotiating a 'peace' between Catholics and Lutherans. Cf the Introductory Note CWE 65 126–31, and the reference above to the *Precatio pro pace ecclesiae*, 'New Testament Scholarship' 318 with n1328.

Psalm 14, *De puritate tabernaculi sive ecclesiae christianae*.[1412] During this period Erasmus composed two other massive works of particular note, the *Explanatio symboli* (1533, for Thomas Boleyn) and the *Ecclesiastes* (1535).[1413] The latter has a special place in the intellectual biography of Erasmus. Although Erasmus had made some approach to the work in 1523,[1414] he apparently made little progress, so that in October 1529 he could still speak of 'beginning to tackle the work.'[1415] From then until its completion in 1535 he spoke repeatedly of the difficulty of the work.[1416] In its final form the work could be construed as, in some manner, a development of the *Ratio,* produced more than a decade before in which he had shown that the liberal arts were a fundamental part of the preacher's equipment. Thus these texts taken together are an impressive witness to Erasmus' continuing and decisive orientation as a Christian humanist in his final years.

**The Challenge of Critics: Late Reformulations**

We have seen that during his last years Erasmus felt himself embattled on almost every front. His *Ciceronianus* had cost him the friendship of Budé and brought an assault by Scaliger; Pietro Corsi was offended by his remarks on Italians; he felt betrayed by Sacramentalists, and he engaged in a bitter public dispute with Martin Bucer. He thought Franciscans, too, were attacking him

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1412 This exposition 'On the Purity of the Tabernacle or of the Christian Church' was dedicated to Christolph Eschenfelder, the customs official who was overjoyed to see Erasmus when his boat stopped at Boppard on Erasmus' return from Basel in September 1518; cf Ep 867:50–7. In the exposition of this Psalm Erasmus appears to distinguish himself from Luther and to define the nature of true piety; cf CWE 64 221 and 246–7.

1413 In 1530 Erasmus also published a short exposition of Psalm 28; its essential purpose, however, was to serve as a preface for his discussion on the issue of war with the Turks; cf CWE 65 211–19 (Psalm 28) and 219–66 (*De bello Turcico*). Two other 'works of piety' composed during Erasmus' last years should be noted, *De praeparatione* (1534, for Thomas Boleyn) and *Precationes* (1535).

1414 Cf Ep 1321:11–13 with n1.

1415 Ep 2225:22

1416 Cf eg Ep 2225:22–4, where Erasmus complained that he could not really get a firm grasp on the subject; also Ep 2261:48–9 (January 1530); cf Ep 2442:9–10: 'I cannot warm up to the work' (March 1531; my translation); and Allen Ep 2508:6–8 (June 1531). In August 1534 he still claimed to have completed only the first book, though he had begun the second and third; cf Allen Ep 2961:25–31 and CWE 67 88–91.

on all sides.[1417] Several critics, however, have a special place in our account in so far as they directed sustained attention to Erasmus' New Testament scholarship, challenging it sometimes on principle, sometimes on particulars, but inevitably offering an opportunity for restatement.

### *Diego López Zúñiga*

López Zúñiga, whose unpleasant work Erasmus had first encountered in the pleasant surroundings of Anderlecht, had been more or less laid to rest shortly after Erasmus had responded in 1524 to his critic's *Conclusiones*.[1418] But the Spaniard came to the surface again as soon as Erasmus had moved to Freiburg, for while Erasmus was in the process of unpacking and arranging his possessions, he discovered 'by chance' a small work published by López Zúñiga in 1524, to which he had not replied, perhaps following the advice of Willibald Pirckheimer.[1419] This small work was the *Assertio*, in which López Zúñiga had defended the Vulgate against the charge of solecisms.[1420] Now, having just arrived in Freiburg, Erasmus found that he had – unusually – a little free time and undertook to respond. He did so in the form of a letter to a friend Hubertus Barlandus, with the intention, he claims, of eliciting laughter at López Zúñiga's buffoonery.[1421] Only the beginning and end of the letter is epistolary in character, where Erasmus does in fact acknowledge mistakes in his work and observes that 'it is difficult to write a volume of *Annotations*. Nothing, on the other hand, is easier than to play the role of Momus in a

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1417 Cf *Epistola ad quosdam impudentissimos gracculos* 'A Letter to Certain Highly Impudent Jackdaws,' short-title form *Epistola ad gracculos*, published as a pamphlet of just four leaves in Freiburg February 1530; cf Ep 2275 with introduction.

1418 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 278 with n1171.

1419 For Pirckheimer's advice see Ep 1480:106–10 (September 1524), a response to Erasmus' complaint in Ep 1466:37–53; cf next note.

1420 In a letter of 21 July 1524 to Pirckheimer, Erasmus complains about two pamphlets recently published by López Zúñiga, a defence of the Vulgate against Erasmus' charge of solecisms (*Assertio ecclesiasticae translationis Novi Testamenti a solecismis quos illi Erasmus Roterodamus impegerat*) and another of a few pages pointing to corrections Erasmus had made in his third edition of the New Testament and that he had derived from López Zúñiga's *Annotationes* without giving due credit; cf Ep 1466 with nn23 and 26. For an account of López Zúñiga's objections expressed in the *Assertio* see the Translator's Note in 'Errors in the Vulgate' 873.

1421 Cf Ep 2172:1–10, 89–92. Barlandus was a humanist physician whose wit Erasmus especially enjoyed; cf Epp 2079:65–9 and 2081 introduction.

long work.'[1422] The core of the letter is a defence of Erasmus' claim that the forty-five solecisms indexed in the 1522 edition were in fact such.[1423] In justifying his claim, Erasmus articulates the principles of a good translation: the deployment of a vocabulary of good Latin defined as the Latin in normal use by the standard authors of antiquity, and the representation of Greek idiomatic expression not in word-for-word Latin but with a notionally equivalent Latin idiom.

In his letter to Barlandus Erasmus noted that López Zúñiga had promised even more of his 'elegant annotations.'[1424] In fact, when López Zúñiga died in 1531, he left in manuscript 'more than a hundred [notes] on Erasmus' fourth edition of the New Testament.'[1425] Erasmus learned of these from a Spanish scholar, Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, residing in Italy at that time, whom indeed Erasmus had mentioned with appreciation in the first and second edition of the *Ciceronianus* and with whom he would engage in an important epistolary discussion on aspects of New Testament scholarship.[1426] In April 1532 Sepúlveda had mentioned the notes in a letter sent to Erasmus with a copy of his defence of Alberto Pio, and in his reply Erasmus showed a very keen interest in acquiring them – perhaps reflecting some thought of a fifth edition of the New Testament.[1427] Although in his reply Erasmus acknowledged that he had received a sample,[1428] he evidently did not receive the full set of notes until 'some time before 17 February 1534.'[1429] It is unclear how far these notes affected the final edition of the New Testament, but in

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1422 Ep 2172:58–9

1423 CWE has followed Allen in printing among the letters the beginning and end of Ep 2172, the *Epistola apologetica adversus Stunicam*; the full text may be found in ASD IX-8 305–38 and will appear in CWE 74. For the list of solecisms see 'Errors in the Vulgate' 875–83. For López Zúñiga's criticisms and Erasmus' defence see the Translator's Note cited in n1420 above.

1424 Ep 2172:77–8

1425 ASD IX-2 33

1426 Cf *Ciceronianus* CWE 28 429 with nn756 and 761. For the epistolary discussion see 344–5 below.

1427 For the information from Sepúlveda see Allen Ep 2637:22–34 (1 April 1532); for Erasmus' reply, 'I should be forever grateful to you, my Ginés, if you would see that the excerpts are sent to me,' see Allen Ep 2701:13–14 (16 August 1532).

1428 Cf Allen Ep 2701:13–14.

1429 ASD IX-2 33, where the tortuous route by which the notes came to Erasmus is also described.

a letter to Sepúlveda in July 1534, written while the fifth edition was being printed, Erasmus says that he 'will not cheat Zúñiga of his praise.'[1430]

### *Frans Titelmans*

Although Frans Titelmans of Louvain had, as we have seen, completed his *Collationes quinque super epistolam ad Romanos* in 1528, the publication of his book did not follow until May 1529,[1431] after Erasmus had arrived in Freiburg. During that summer Erasmus drafted a reply. In August he sent to Johann von Botzheim a letter that included a sample of his intended reply, prefaced by an introductory note and a summary of Titelmans' criticisms.[1432] In this prefatory summary Erasmus disregarded Titelmans' theological claim that the languages of Scripture played a decisive role in the divine economy of salvation.[1433] He did note that Titelmans had redefined 'solecism' to exclude incorrect language used for a godly purpose, in particular when the Translator's language reflected the incorrect Greek speech of the apostolic authors. Erasmus also cited Titlemans' contention, now familiar from his other critics, that the Vulgate was divinely inspired in the sense that the Holy Spirit breathed into the Translator every word, phrase, and sentence as he translated, a claim made with the implication that improvement was impossible. Erasmus met such stereotypical criticism with a reply now familiar: that it was a manifest fact that the language of the Vulgate had been corrupted; that he recognized a double inspiration, one attributed only to the original authors of Scripture and one available to expositor and Translator, and of these the Translator required less inspiration than the expositor; and that 'Scripture' resided in the sense, not the words.[1434] Titelmans' attempt to redefine 'solecism' was rejected by Erasmus on the grounds that to recognize

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1430 Cf Allen Ep 2951:10; for the printing of the New Testament 'with the annotations' see Allen Ep 2951:12–13.

1431 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 265–6 with n1109.

1432 Cf Ep 2206:1–22 (introductory note) and 23–140 (summary). The sample that followed the summary was a preliminary sketch of what became Erasmus'response to Titelmans, as found in the *Responsio ad Collationes*, but this sample covered only the responses on Romans 1 and the first part of Romans 2. The sample is omitted in CWE (and in Allen) but is included in the letter printed in LB IIIb 1234A–1240B.

1433 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 266 with n1110.

1434 Cf Ep 2206:23–116 (19 August 1529).

incorrect speech in the Greek that had been carried over into (incorrect) Latin was to admit that the Translator solecized, for to 'solecize' was, quite simply, to admit incorrect expression into the Latin text – for whatever reason.[1435]

Erasmus prefaced the *Responsio ad Collationes*, published in October, first with a new and completely rewritten version of the introductory note in the letter to Botzheim, that is, the first twenty-two lines, addressing it now 'To the Reader.' These lines were, in effect, a personal and rather vicious attack on Titelmans, an attack whose tone can be recognized from the title Erasmus gave his work: *Responsio ad Collationes cuiusdam iuvenis gerontodidascali* 'Response to the *Discussions* of a Certain "Youth Who Would Teach his Elders."' Erasmus deplored the mock piety and the feigned love unmistakenly evident in the insertion of psalms between the collations, evident also in persisting phrases like 'dearest Erasmus.' It was preposterous that this young man should pretend to lecture not only Erasmus but Valla and Lefèvre also, and even while doing so unfairly blame Erasmus more than Valla and Lefèvre for disrespect towards the Translator. After this introduction, Erasmus copied word for word into the text of the *Responsio ad Collationes* the summary that had preceded the sketch of responses in the letter to Botzheim. He then moved at once to a discussion of Titelmans' criticisms, not quite point for point, but addressing sytematically those points he regarded as most important.

Because Titelmans had attempted to defend the language, expression, and the readings of the Vulgate, Erasmus' responses are pervasively philological in character, though certainly not always without theological ramifications. This controversy with Titelmans, however, is important for Erasmus' New Testament scholarship primarily for its enormous influence on the fifth edition (1535) of the *Annotations*, specifically the annotations on Romans. In the largest proportion by far, the additions to the *1535* annotations on this Epistle reflect Erasmus' responses in the *Responsio ad Collationes* to objections raised by Titelmans and can reasonably be supposed to have their roots in this controversy even though they seldom copy directly from the earlier work. They consist of discussions on the proper construction of a passage,[1436]

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1435 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 366 with n1585.

1436 Compare eg the *1535* additions to the annotations on Rom 2:7 ('to those seeking life'), 4:12 ('not to those only who are of the circumcision'), 9:10 ('from intercourse one time only') CWE 56 76–7, 113–14, 256–7 with CWE 73 160–1, 176–7, 231–2.

on the nuance and proper translation of Greek words,[1437] and on grammar.[1438] In some cases the construction of a sentence, while essentially a philological problem, had theological implications, which Erasmus recognized. We shall see more specifically the relation between philology and theology in a review below of three annotations in particular.[1439]

The publication of the *Responsio ad Collationes* did not conclude the debate with Frans Titelmans. Titelmans replied to Erasmus in a letter dated December 1529. With this letter he sent a manuscript copy of a study he had made of Revelation, inviting Erasmus to reply but without the 'fabrications and deceptions' in which he, Erasmus, had indulged in the *Responsio ad Collationes*.[1440] Titelmans' book, published in 1530, challenged Erasmus on his annotation on Revelation 22:20 (*etiam venio cito*), where he discusses the authorship of the book. In the prefatory letter to his manuscript, Titelmans declared that he was simply dumbfounded when he first read the subtle arguments Erasmus raised against the Johannine authorship, arguments that could shake the faith of believers. On closer reading, however, he detected the prejudice and the falsehoods in the case Erasmus made.[1441] His book, Titelmans wrote, was intended not only to show how dangerous it is to call into doubt established truth but also to urge Erasmus 'to consider how far the entire work of your *Annotations* required revision (in spite of the four editions already published) once you have discovered in a single annotation so many weak points, some things manifestly false, some things badly understood or misrepresented.'[1442]

### *Alberto Pio*

When he died on 31 January 1531, Alberto Pio left not quite completed a manuscript in which he had attempted to respond to Erasmus' *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* of 1529. The work was completed by Pio's secretary,

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1437 Compare eg the *1535* additions to the annotations on Rom 8:18 ('for I suppose'), 8:19 ('for the expectation of the creature'), 8:27 ('what the Spirit desires') CWE 56 214–15, 216–17, 222–3 with CWE 73 222, 223, 224.

1438 Compare eg the *1535* addition to the annotation on Rom 5:1 ('let us have peace in regard to God') CWE 56 127–8 with CWE 73 181–2.

1439 Annotations on Rom 5:1, 5:12, and 9:5; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 377–80.

1440 Cf Ep 2245:59.

1441 Cf Ep 2417:51–65.

1442 Cf Allen Ep 2417:97–101 (my translation; cf CWE 18, Ep 2417:91–6).

Francesco Florido, and publisher, Josse Bade, and published in March[1443] with the title *Tres et viginti libri in locos lucubrationum variarum D. Erasmi Roterodami*.[1444] The first part of the work (books 1–2) printed Erasmus' *Responsio* with Pio's comments in the margins; there followed book 3, a discussion of the *Moria*, while books 4–23 cited and discussed passages from Erasmus' writings organized around topics, for example, fasting (book 4), monks (book 5), rituals (book 6) etc. Erasmus responded quickly with his *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii*.[1445]

Erasmus' *Apologia* adds very little to enhance our understanding of his New Testament scholarship; very seldom does the *Apologia* go beyond what he had already said in his earlier *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii*. But three points are to be noted. First, in countering Pio's complaint that the absence of the actual text of Scripture from the pages of a *Paraphrase* allows misinterpretation to go unchecked, Erasmus stressed more emphatically than in his *Responsio* that he had cited the Vulgate in the margins precisely to cue the reader to the scriptural context.[1446] Second, Erasmus had characteristically denied any decisive distinction between commentator and paraphrast. Pio challenged this view with a striking image: 'Commentators claim to be the servants of their authors, but paraphrasers their collaborators and colleagues.'[1447] While Erasmus can easily deny that he has ever claimed to be a colleague of the biblical authors, he leaves unanswered the troublesome ambiguity that arises from the confusion of 'voices' in the paraphrastic text. Finally, we should note

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1443 Cf CWE 84 lxxix, lxxxiv–lxxxvi.

1444 'Twenty-three Books Against Passages of Diverse Works by Erasmus of Rotterdam,' cited in CWE 84 as XXIII *Libri* 'Twenty-three Books'; for the extended title see CWE 84 cxxxvi; and for an English translation of the title, ibidem cxiv.

1445 *Defence Against the Patchworks of Alberto Pio*. The work was printed by Froben in June 1531 (CEBR III 88) with two titles; cf CWE 84 xcix and cxxxviii.

1446 The marginal citations are merely short phrases normally from the Vulgate placed in the margin to call to mind and locate the extended Vulgate passage paraphrased. In the *Paraphrases* on the Epistles, the marginal citations grow with time. In the first two editions of the *Paraphrase on Romans* such marginalia are absent. They begin to appear in the first edition of the *Paraphrase on the Two Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians*, but rather sparsely, and continue so in all the first editions of the *Paraphrases* on the apostolic Epistles. The collected editions, however, beginning with that of 1521, offer in increasing abundance this helpful guide to the reader. In the *Paraphrases* on the Gospels (all editions) there are relatively few marginal citations, and they are nonexistent in the *Paraphrase on Acts*. See the illustration 337.

1447 Cf CWE 84 147 n230, where Pio is cited.

# IN EPISTOLAM PAV

## LI APOSTOLI AD ROMANOS PARAPHRASIS

### PER ERASMVM ROTERODAMVM

AVLVS ego ille è Saulo factus, è turbulento pacificus, nuper obnoxius legi Mosaicæ, nūc Mosi libertus, seruus autē factus Iesu Christi, haud quidem perfuga, desertorue pristini instituti, sed accersitus ad huius legationis munus, ac felicius segregatus quàm eram, cum pharisaicæ factionis propugnator, impie pius, & indocte doctus errarem: sed nunc demum uere Pharisæi dignus cognomine, quippe semotus selectusq; ab ipso Christo, ad obeundum negociū longe præclarius, nempe ad prædicandum Euangeliū dei, nec id sanè nouum, sed iam olim ab ipso promissum prophetarum ipsius oraculis, quæ nunc quoq; extant in libris non quibuslibet, sed sanctis inuiolatæq; fidei, de filio ipsius, qui in tempore natus est è stirpe Dauidica iuxta carnis infirmitatem, sed idem declaratus est æterni dei æternus esse filius iuxta spiritum omnia sanctificantem: declaratus autem cum alijs permultis argumentis, tum præcipue ex eo, quod ipse deuicta morte, resurgens è mortuis, omnibus in ipso renatis, resurrectionis princeps & autor factus est Iesus Christus dominus noster: per quem nos non solum hanc gratiam, quam legis obseruatio conferre non poterat, sumus assecuti, uerūetiam apostolicam functionem, quò quemadmodum per alios apostolos inter Iudæos diuulgatum est Euangeliū Christi, ita per me prædicetur inter gentes quascunq;: non ut inuoluātur legis oneribus, sed ut sese fidei de Christo prædicatæ submittant, & huic innitantur, non inani philosophorum sapientiæ: de quarum gentium numero estis uos quoq;, quantum ad genus attiner, cęterum adoptione asciti in ius, & cognomen Iesu Christi, ne iam sectarū aut regionum uocabula uos dirimant, cum communis sit omniū adoptio. Quot quot igitur estis Romæ deo chari, & à pristinis uitijs ad sanctimoniam uitæ uocati, gratiam uobis opto pacemq;: nō quam mundus hic uulgato more solet precari, sed ueram nouamq; gratiam, hoc est gratuitum donū Euangelicæ fidei uere iustificantis, & per hanc penitus abolitis omnibus uitæ præteritæ commissis, securæ iam conscientiæ pacem, stabilemq; amicitiam cum deo: quæ duo non præstant uel humanæ sapientiæ uires, uel Mosaicæ legis obseruatio, sed omnibus proficiscuntur à singulari munificentia dei patris, & huius filij, domini nostri Iesu Christi. Atq; in primis quidem gratias ago deo patri, uestro omnium nomine, qui per filium Christum hoc uobis largitus est, ut qui ántehac eratis increduli, nunc fides uestra celebretur, prædicetur

*Alludit ad Saulum quod dicitur inquietudo*

*Alludit ad pharisæi nomen, quod à diuisione dictum sit*

*In scripturis sanctis* 1:2

*Ex resurrectione mortuorum* 1:4

*In omnibus gentibus* 1:5

*Dilectis dei uocatis sanctis* 1:7



*Paraphrases* on the apostolic Epistles, 1532 folio edition, Romans 1 with marginalia

that in books 4–23, although Pio cited from a variety of Erasmus' works, the New Testament *Annotations* together with the *Ratio* constituted the largest sources of Pio's discontent.[1448] The *Ratio* seemed particularly offensive: 'But in the *Methodus* [that is, the *Ratio*] … how many difficulties you disseminate, how many snares you set, how much you detract from the authority of the gospel, and, finally, from the deeds and words of Jesus Christ …'[1449]

### *The Paris Theologians*

In March 1527 Erasmus had published his definitive reply to Noël Béda's critique of the *Paraphrases*. Although Béda himself came under attack in the course of the year, he managed to secure from the faculty of theology a formal condemnation of '114 propositions drawn mostly from Erasmus' *Paraphrases* on the New Testament and his books against Béda.'[1450] The following year, on 23 June 1528, Béda succeeded in getting the whole university to ratify the theologians' censure of Erasmus' '*Colloquies* and other works.'[1451] Although Erasmus would have known of the university's condemnation shortly after it had occurred, the censures were not actually published until July 1531 when they appeared in the *Determinatio*.[1452]

The *Determinatio* was clearly inspired by Béda and reflected in detail the criticism Béda had already made of Erasmus' *Paraphrases*. Understandably, the censures also referred to Erasmus' 1527 responses to Béda.[1453] However,

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1448 Cf CWE 84 lxxvii n85, where a 'rough estimate' includes 'over' sixty citations from the *Annotations*, twenty-four from *Ratio*, thirty-four from the Jerome edition, twenty-two from *Enchiridion*, and nineteen from the 'most frequently cited colloquies.'

1449 Cf CWE 84 300 n1131.

1450 Cf Ep 1902 introduction; also CWE 14 xvi and Ep 2033 n15, where the number of propositions is given as 112; Clarence Miller and James K. Farge speak of 'a general condemnation of propositions drawn from several of Erasmus' books' CWE 82 xx. The condemnation took place on 16 December 1527.

1451 Cf CWE 14 xvi and Ep 2037 introduction.

1452 The censures were published in 1531 under the title *Determinatio facultatis theologiae in schola Parisiensi super quam plurimis assertionibus D. Erasmi Roterodami* (Paris: Josse Bade). The *Determinatio* included the censures of the *Colloquies* in May 1526; cf Ep 2033:35–43 with n15; also CWE 82 8 n4 and x n1 where the title is translated as 'A Determination of the Theological Faculty in the University of Paris Concerning Many Assertions by Erasmus of Rotterdam.'

1453 In addition, a few of Erasmus' annotations were censured (cf Topic 19 CWE 82 196–206), while several propositions censured comments in other works of Erasmus.

whereas Béda had followed the biblical text in sequence, the *Determinatio* arranged the censures topically, under *tituli* (translated 'Topics' in CWE 82), enabling the theologians to assemble under a single topic evidence of error from several places in Erasmus' *Paraphrases* and in his responses to Béda, thus building the accusations into a structure rhetorically more formidable than Béda's critique. Erasmus responded appropriately, that is, more cautiously and with more dignity than he had responded to Béda; in fact, some people apparently thought his *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas sub nomine facultatis theologiae Parisiensis* was a palinode. He rightly contended that the *Declarationes*, that is, *Clarifications*, represented no change of mind.[1454]

The censures raised issues of undoubted importance. They forced Erasmus to acknowledge a fairly long list (Topic 14) of straightforward factual errors in his *Paraphrases*, errors already noted by Béda. Another list (Topic 13) cited passages from the *Paraphrases* that reflected Erasmus' own controversial readings of Scripture texts, differing from the Vulgate readings: Luke 2:14 ('good will towards men'), John 1:1 (*sermo* for *verbum*), 1 Corinthians 15:51 ('we shall not all sleep'), 1 John 5:7–8 (the Johannine comma) – to mention the most egregious, those that Erasmus had, notoriously, struggled elsewhere to defend.[1455] The censures complained that the paraphrast should have submitted to the 'common use' of the Latin church, should have followed the great Latin Fathers, including Hugh of St Cher (!), and should have attempted no interpretation that would disturb the peace of the church.[1456]

In fact, the *Determinatio* focused sharply the question 'What is the obligation of a paraphrast?' The Paris theologians understood and accepted the hermeneutical principle of 'the persons and the time' but insisted that this principle imposed on the paraphrast the obligation to distinguish the past from the present, the early Christian society from the contemporary church. It was the paraphrast's obligation to explain in his *Paraphrase* that a command laid down for the apostles in the context of a non-Christian world was not applicable in the same way in the Christian world of the sixteenth century.[1457] Erasmus had repeatedly insisted on the principle of 'observing the persons and the time' not only as a guideline for writing paraphrases but also as a key

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1454 Cf Allen Ep 2892:57–60 (24 December 1533). The full title is translated in CWE 82 note 3 on page x as *Clarifications Concerning the Censures Published at the University of Paris in the Name of the Theology Faculty There*. I adopt throughout the short titles *Declarationes* and *Clarifications* as in CWE 82.

1455 Cf CWE 82 159–62 (Topic 14) and 145–59 (Topic 13).

1456 Cf CWE 82 155.

1457 See Topic 23 CWE 82 213–27 for the censures and Erasmus' response.

to interpreting Scripture.[1458] But in writing paraphrases, he followed the principle in a direction precisely opposite to that of the Paris theologians: it was the obligation of a paraphrast to create in his *explanatio* a lively image of the original persons and time. His response in relation to the troublesome parable of the wheat and the tares in Matthew 13 is not without implied sarcasm: 'If in my *Paraphrases* regard for the persons gives me no support, I will assuredly be in trouble … The accusation is that I did not say that Christ's word applied only to the primitive church … In the first place, I did not dare to mix in a human observation with the majesty of the gospel, especially when I did not find this interpretation among the ancient orthodox, and the very words of Christ seem to reject it … What sort of paraphrast would I have been if under the persona either of Christ or of Matthew the evangelist I had added, "[This applies] only for four hundred years, after which … it will be safe to kill …"'[1459] In fact, Erasmus was able, as we know, by his literary skill to create allusive images of the first Christians that pointed indubitably to his own era, serving as a corrective to his contemporary church rather than an acknowledgment of his subservience to it. The message of the paraphrases was often conveyed precisely through such ambiguity of persons and time; 'persons and time' stood not for a simple rule but a complex principle.[1460]

When the theologians assembled Béda's criticisms, they were able to bring into sharp focus the theological implications of the *Paraphrases*. Of special interest are three Topics (7, 8, 9) devoted to a critique of the representation of faith and the Mosaic law in the *Paraphrases*. In these Topics the censures declared that the representation of faith, particularly in the phrase 'faith alone,' misrepresented Scripture, and that the *Paraphrases* denigrated the Law.[1461] Erasmus insisted that his paraphrases referred the expression 'faith alone' only to the initial process of salvation: faith alone without merits sufficed to bring the sinner to salvation; after conversion, charity expressing itself in good works was essential. 'When my *Paraphrase* says that faith alone is required of those who approach the gospel, it does not exclude good

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1458 Cf eg *Declarationes* in Topic 3 CWE 82 37–41 and Topic 5 CWE 82 61–7. For the hermeneutical principle see *Ratio* 527.

1459 My translation is in part a paraphrase; cf the translation in CWE 82 214–15.

1460 In the preface to the *Declarationes*, Erasmus acknowledged that he sometimes did speak in absolute terms, with the implication that what applied to the New Testament era applied to all periods of time; but he asked his critics to accept the fact that absolute terms are commonly used as a manner of speaking; cf CWE 82 10–11.

1461 Cf CWE 82 69–90 (faith) and 90–113 (Law).

works, which faith generates in those who have been purified.'[1462] He insisted that faith is by nature most securely joined to charity as the inseparable companion of charity, but it was not appropriate for him as paraphrast to discuss in his paraphrase whether the perfect gift of faith can be infused without the gift of charity.[1463] The subject appears again in Erasmus' response to Topics 16 and 17 on 'merits and good works.' Here Erasmus definitively distinguishes himself from Luther: '[My paraphrases] do not offer even the tiniest support to the Lutheran heresy, since my propositions [faith alone suffices without merits] speak of those who are purified by baptism, whereas Luther speaks of the good works of adults after baptism.'[1464]

Erasmus denied that his *Paraphrases* denigrated the Law. His *Paraphrases* represented the Law as a divine gift intended gradually to lead a primitive and difficult people into obedience to the will of God. The *Paraphrases* also represented the Law as possessing in addition to its 'carnal sense' a 'spiritual sense.' But Erasmus had also to explain some of the language he used to describe the Law, for example, expressions like 'crass' and 'superstitious.' These terms, Erasmus explained, were used 'figuratively' in the *Paraphrases*. They were 'tropes,' in the case of 'crass' to refer to the external practice of the Law, in the case of 'superstitious' to refer to an improper, virtually pagan observance of its rites.[1465]

Erasmus had most probably acquired a copy of the *Determinatio* by late September, if not before.[1466] While the chronology of the 1532 edition of the *Paraphrases on All the Apostolic Epistles* is not well defined, it is reasonable to suppose that the Paris censures were clearly in Erasmus' purview when revising the *Paraphrases* on the Epistles, and some of the revisions in it were designed to clarify and emphasize his point of view in response to the concerns of Béda and the theologians. In the paraphrases on Romans 1:7 and

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1462 Cf CWE 82 80.

1463 Cf CWE 82 70–6. In the 1535 edition of the *Annotations* Erasmus addressed profusely in two annotations on 1 Corinthians 13 the relation of faith and charity; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 380–2.

1464 CWE 82 169: 'Speak of those … purified by baptism,' ie 'speak of what is required of those who come to be purified by baptism.' Cf CWE 82 81: 'Faith is an access in such a way that it continually follows the person who goes forward and plays a principal role in pious deeds.'

1465 Cf CWE 82 109–12.

1466 Erasmus mentions the *Determinatio* for the first time in Ep 2552, dated by Allen 'September–October 1531'; cf the introduction to the letter. James K. Farge assumes that Erasmus would have known of the *Determinatio* shortly after its publication in July; cf ASD IX-7 1 and CWE 82 x.

10:16, additions in *1532* clarify the role of faith in the progression of Christian experience.[1467] Several additions appear to 'rehabilitate' the Law. Thus, in the paraphrase on Romans 3:20, the addition of merely two words *iuxta literam* '[observed] according to the letter' qualifies the previous rather negative statement that the law of Moses has no power.[1468]

### *Martin Luther*

The bitter criticism of Martin Luther, arising from Erasmus' publication of the *Explanatio symboli* (1533) and expressed in a letter of 11 March 1534 to Nikolaus von Amsdorf,[1469] should not be entirely overlooked. While Erasmus' response, the *Purgatio adversus epistolam Lutheri* offers virtually no new insights into his New Testament scholarship, the points at which Luther attacks it are of interest here in so far as they correspond with the criticisms of Catholic theologians. In particular: (1) Erasmus' use of the word *fabula* to describe the story of salvation; (2) in the Argument prefacing the *Paraphrase on Romans*, Erasmus' view of the difficulty of the Pauline Epistles and his statement that Peter, speaking of Christ, avoids the word 'God'; (3) the use of the language of human sexuality in the explanation of Mary's impregnation by the Holy Spirit; (4) in the *De philosophia evangelica* the claim that the truth of the gospel can be found in both pagan writings and the Old Testament; (5) in the *Ratio* the image of the circle;[1470] and (6) in the Argument preceding the text of 1 John, Erasmus' comment on 'worlds.'[1471] From this short summary, it appears that Erasmus understood the onus of Luther's criticism to be directed primarily towards the theological significance of language. Erasmus' response is perhaps nowhere more instructive than his defence of the word *fabula*: the word may find its natural home in 'profane'

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1467 Cf CWE 42 16 with n7 and 61 with n8. The translation of the paraphrase on Rom 1:7 'abolition through grace of the sins of your former life' should, I think, be corrected to 'abolition through faith'; *hanc* will accordingly refer to its nearer antecedent *fidei*.

1468 CWE 42 24. For other examples see CWE 42 46 n4, 58 n24, 119 n16.

1469 Cf the Introductory Note (CWE 78 396) to Erasmus' *Purgatio adversus epistolam Lutheri*, translated as *Purgation against Luther* CWE 78 412–64.

1470 Cf *Purgatio adversus epistolam Lutheri* CWE 78 451 with n237, where it is suggested that Luther had in mind not the image of the concentric circles but the affirmation that Christ's life was self-consistent and consistent with his teaching; cf *Ratio* 548 with n297.

1471 Cf the summary in the Introductory Note, CWE 78 400–2.

literature, but sacred literature often employs just such 'profane' language to deliver its truth.[1472]

**Scholarly Exchanges in the Correspondence**

Erasmus' major publications in response to notable critics do not stand entirely alone in extending the context for our appreciation of his New Testament scholarship. In his last years Erasmus had occasion in his letters to further his reflection on problems arising from his work on the New Testament. He had scarcely arrived in Freiburg when he received an invitation from Ambrosius Pelargus, like himself a Catholic refugee from Basel, to discuss in an amicable way passages in his work that required correction and clarification.[1473] In the subsequent correspondence[1474] Pelargus argued a small point, that Judas (Thaddaeus, Lebbaeus), named as apostle in Luke 6:16, was brother, not son, of James. Erasmus eventually conceded, as changes in his *Annotations* and *Paraphrases* indicate.[1475] Pelargus also played a significant role in the second edition of the *Clarifications*. Erasmus asked for his criticisms when he was 'forced to revise his *Declarationes*.' Pelargus' response offered a substantial critical review of the first edition. Among his criticisms we may note especially that Pelargus took issue with Erasmus' claim that in paraphrasing he (Erasmus) maintained the temporal framework of the New Testament times, and he questioned Erasmus' interpretation of Romans 5:12 as a reference not to original sin but to the actual sin of each individual.[1476]

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1472 Cf CWE 78 423–5.

1473 Cf Ep 2169:14–31.

1474 Cf Epp 2170, 2181–2, 2184–6. For the concession Erasmus would make see Ep 2185:3–12.

1475 Cf the paraphrase on Acts 1:13 CWE 50 9 with n71, the paraphrase on Matt 10:3 CWE 45 166 with n6, and the paraphrase on Luke 6:16 CWE 47 191 with n16; and for the several lists of the names of the disciples see CWE 50 9 n71. Cf also the *1535* change in the annotation on Matt 10:3 (*primus Simon*) ASD VI-5 186:847 (critical apparatus). Before Pelargus, Béda had noted the same 'error'; cf ASD IX-5 348:89–90 and 778:571–82, where Erasmus explains the 'mistake' as a slip of the pen and says he has made the correction. In fact, the changes in the *Annotations* and *Paraphrases* were not made until the editions of the 1530s, although the 'correction' was made in the *Loca quaedam emendata*, for which see n1498 below. The Paris theologians also cited the 'error,' CWE 82 159; but cf CWE 82 159 n582.

1476 Cf Allen Ep 2666 and the correspondence that followed, Epp 2667–70 (July 1532), where Pelargus revealed his fear that his criticisms offended Erasmus. For a general summary of the influence of Pelargus in the *Declarationes* see CWE 82 xxx–xxxii; and for the two criticisms cited here, CWE 82 188 n683 and 208–9 with n752.

In January 1530 Erasmus wrote a letter,[1477] appended to his translation of Zenophon's *Hieron*[1478] and addressed to his old friend Pieter Gillis of Antwerp, in which he greatly expanded the discussion in his reply to Titelmans on the language of Romans 8:27, a discussion that appears (much abbreviated) as a *1535* addition to the annotation on the verse ('what the spirit desires').[1479] A less congenial discussion took place in 1531 with Agostino Steuco in two very lengthy letters, an initial letter from Erasmus (Ep 2465, 27 March 1531) and a reply from Steuco (Allen Ep 2513, 25 July 1531).[1480] Steuco was a Hebrew scholar and librarian at the monastery of Sant'Antonio in Venice, which had acquired the magnificent library of Domenico Grimani. While the letters are very interesting apart from their bearing on Erasmus' New Testament scholarship,[1481] it is the latter we should note, and particularly on one point: Erasmus' occasional expression of a preference for the Septuagint over the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, here with the paraphrase on Luke 24:27 directly in question.[1482] Erasmus explained that in this situation the Septuagint was more suited to the typological interpretation of the passage; that in adopting the Septuagint at points, he was following the precedent set by the apostles and evangelists; and, finally, that Jerome himself had rendered the Vulgate according to the Septuagint.[1483]

We should note last of all Juan Ginés Sepúlveda, who, once apologist for Alberto Pio, raised an issue that lay at the foundation of Erasmus' New

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1477 Ep 2260

1478 Published in 1530, prefatory letter to Anton Fugger (13 February 1530), Ep 2273; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 325 with n1379.

1479 Cf CWE 56 222–3.

1480 Erasmus refers to Steuco in a *1535* addition to the *Contra morosos*; cf paragraph 27i with n92.

1481 In his letter to Steuco, Erasmus describes his visit to Domenico Grimani in Rome in July 1509 before leaving for England; cf Ep 2465:1–55 and 'New Testament Scholarship' 22 with n126. It was to Grimani that Erasmus had dedicated his first *Paraphrase*. Steuco's reply is memorable for his blunt enumeration of Erasmus' faults: Erasmus' sarcastic tongue and biting style, his lack of humility and obvious jealousy; it is memorable also for his detailed accusation that the turmoil in the church and the widespread commitment to reform stemmed directly from Erasmus' books (Allen Ep 2513:401–67).

1482 Cf CWE 48 261 with n107; the reference is to Gen 37:2. This appeal to the Septuagint appeared, of course, to contradict Erasmus' hermeneutical principle that the preferred text was the one in the original language.

1483 Cf Ep 2465:423–45. Ambrosius Pelargus was no doubt aware of Erasmus' preference for the translation of the 'Seventy' when, writing from Trier in September 1534, he urged Erasmus to make a translation of the Septuagint; cf Allen Ep

Testament enterprise: the value of the Greek Byzantine manuscript tradition Erasmus had followed. The discussion was to last from 1533 to 1536. Through a careful study of Codex Vaticanus in the papal library, Sepúlveda was able to show that this Greek manuscript from the Vatican corresponded more closely with the Vulgate than with the manuscripts behind Erasmus' text.[1484] Though Erasmus had appealed to Codex Vaticanus in his debate with López Zúñiga,[1485] he now questioned its authority, observing that it had been made to conform to the Vulgate.[1486] On a point of lesser importance, Sepúlveda had challenged Erasmus' translation of *συστοιχεῖ* in Galatians 4:25;[1487] Erasmus had rendered the word by *confinis est* 'borders on,' though the sense here is rather 'corresponds to,' as in RSV.[1488] The discussion seems to have been largely responsible for a new annotation in *1535* of nearly a page.[1489] Thus, in his last years friends and critics alike induced from Erasmus a lively engagement on problems directly related to his work on the New Testament.[1490]

Pelargus and Sepúlveda were younger men, willing, even eager, to engage with the older scholar in a congenial way on philological problems in Scripture. Others sought from Erasmus approval, support, or patronage for their own work on the New Testament. Though Melanchthon had not, it seems, consulted Erasmus on his own commentary on Romans, he was

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2966:50–6 with 51n, where Allen suggests that Pelargus was dissatisfied with the interlinear Latin translation in the Complutensian Polyglot Bible, for which López Zúñiga was in part responsible.

1484 Cf Allen Ep 2873:1–34 (October 1533).

1485 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 197 with n764 and 309 with n1291.

1486 Cf Allen Ep 2905:37–46 with 40–1nn. For his assertion that Codex Vaticanus had been conformed to the Vulgate Erasmus appealed to the 'Golden Bull,' which Allen identified in his note as issued in November 1435 at the Council of Basel (1431–7), but which 'contains no reference to the correction of Greek MSS' in accordance with the Latin Vulgate, as Erasmus claimed. Erasmus may be thinking of the Council of Ferrara-Florence, which met (1438–9) to effect a union of the Greek and Roman churches, but no such document was issued during its session. Erasmus was forced to admit that his appeal was misplaced; cf Allen Ep 2951:49–57; and for further allusions to Codex Vaticanus see 'New Testament Scholarship' 362 with n1572 and *Contra morosos* paragraph 41a.

1487 Cf Allen Ep 2873:35–74.

1488 Cf Allen Ep 2905:16–30.

1489 Cf the annotation on Gal 4:25 (*qui coniunctus est ei quae nunc est Hierus*).

1490 In so far as these letters contain discussions of New Testament problems, they bear comparison with Erasmus' earlier (1516) epistolary exchange with Budé (cf Epp 403, 441). Cf also the correspondence in 1525 with Benedetto Giovio, to whom, however, Erasmus responded somewhat curtly (Epp 1634A and 1635).

evidently interested in Erasmus' opinion, which, as it turned out, was less than enthusiastic.[1491] Jacopo Sadoleto, secretary of the Apostolic Secretariat and bishop of Carpentras, eagerly canvassed Erasmus' help in writing a commentary on Romans.[1492] Sadoleto sent a draft in the summer of 1533, which apparently received Erasmus' straightforward admonition, to the point, Erasmus feared, of being offensive.[1493] A surprising request came from Johannes Cochlaeus, a correspondent of Erasmus since 1525, though a rigid anti-Lutheran.[1494] Cochlaeus desired Erasmus' sponsorship for a little book (*libellus*) in the form of a letter to King James v of Scotland, urging the king to prevent vernacular translations in his realm. Erasmus complied.[1495] Although Erasmus' brief prefatory letter to the king contains only a single sentence that could be construed as supportive of Cochlaeus' position,[1496] the concession to his friend seems to be a manifest contradiction of his firmly expressed conviction that favoured vernacular translations of the Bible.[1497]

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1491 Melanchthon's commentary was published in Wittenberg in 1532. Melanchthon advertised the work to Erasmus in October 1532 (Allen Ep 2732:25–6); for Erasmus' opinion see Allen Epp 2818:63–8 (12 June 1533) and 2970:26–8 (6 October 1534).

1492 Cf Allen Ep 2648:11–34 (May 1532). Sadoleto's humanist interests are noted below; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 370 with n1597.

1493 Cf Allen Ep 2816 introduction (June 1533) and CEBR III 186.

1494 Cf CEBR I 321–2.

1495 Cf Allen Ep 2886 (8 December 1533) with the introduction.

1496 Cf Allen Ep 2886:11–13: 'What I now ask has great importance, I am persuaded, for the tranquillity of your kingdom.' Cf James' reply, Allen Ep 2950 (1 July 1534), especially 4–6: 'Accordingly, be well assured that we have been very pleased to receive the recommendation of Erasmus to repel Lutheranism, the common enemy of Christians.'

1497 At an earlier point Erasmus had made some qualification of his 'firmly held conviction'; cf the exchange with Cousturier, 'New Testament Scholarship' 277 with n1167. Also, the context of Erasmus' letter should be kept in mind. Alexander Alesius, a Scottish monk accused of heresy, had fled to Wittenberg. When in 1533 the Scottish bishops forbade the reading of vernacular translations, Alesius wrote from Wittenberg to James v opposing the decree. Cochlaeus considered Alesius' letter inspired by Lutheranism and wrote his letter to James v in opposition to Alesius. Erasmus' support for Cochlaeus may thus have found some justification in Erasmus' relation to Lutheranism, a relationship for so long seen as ambiguous; cf Allen Ep 2886 introduction; ODCC 37 'Alesius.' It should, moreover, be remembered that Erasmus had an indirect relationship with James v, inasmuch as he had in Italy briefly tutored the two natural sons of James IV, father of James v; cf CEBR II 230–1. For Erasmus' recognition of the value of the vernacular languages for preaching see CWE 67 167.

**The Final Revisions: Tracing the Temporal Trajectory**

Sometime in or about February 1529, shortly before leaving Basel for Freiburg, Erasmus wrote a preface 'To the Reader' for a short document of twenty-six pages of corrections primarily for his Jerome, his New Testament, and his *Paraphrases*.[1498] In this preface he records, with all his gifts for story-telling, a dream he had in the course of his daily devotions, kneeling at his bed in prayer. To abbreviate prosaically a highly poetic account: a young man appeared to Erasmus, advising him that his departure from this world was close at hand. Erasmus, certain that his New Testament and *Paraphrases* would never be reprinted in his remaining lifetime, took warning from the dream and published these corrections.[1499] Erasmus' certainty in February 1529 that there would be no further editions of his New Testament scholarship meets us as an unexpected turn. In 1525 and 1526 Erasmus spoke to friends about his desire to 'perfect' and 'correct' his *Paraphrases*.[1500] He had offered his *Paraphrases* among some other 'religious works' to the Aldine Press in September 1526 and promised to send a list of corrections if the press agreed to publish.[1501] Writing to Thomas More in March 1527, he explained that among his many labours 'a good bit of time was devoted also to revising the *Paraphrases*.'[1502] In fact, when in March 1527 he had published together his several responses to the charges of Béda, he had inserted immediately after the *Supputatio* four pages of corrections with a brief but

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1498 The document, *Loca quaedam in aliquot Erasmi lucubrationibus per ipsum emendata* 'Some Passages in Some of Erasmus' Works That He Himself Has Emended' was attached as an appendix to the second edition of his *Apologia adversus monachos* (1529). Cf Ep 2095 with introduction. The title is abbreviated as *Loca quaedam emendata*; those corrections that are carried over into the *Annotations* are noted in the critical apparatus of the ASD volumes. For a short list of such corrections appearing in the annotations on 1 Corinthians see ASD VI-8 14. Bateman finds in this booklet of corrections only seven selections from the *Paraphrases* on the apostolic Epistles (Bateman 'Textual Travail' 243–4).

1499 For the dream see Ep 2095:21–53; for Erasmus' assumption that there would be no further editions of his New Testament scholarship during his lifetime, ibidem 56–8.

1500 Cf Epp 1547:18–19 (to Maarten Lips, 11 February 1525), 1672:156–61 (to Johann Henckel, 7 March 1526), 1687:33–4 (7 April 1526): 'I have begun … work on the *Paraphrases*.'

1501 Cf Ep 1746:18–24 (3 September 1526).

1502 Cf Ep 1804:78–9 (30 March 1527). For reprints of the *Paraphrases* on the Gospels, occasionally with some corrections, see CWE 42 xxvii and Ep 1672 n25.

interesting preface that offers no indication that the corrections were to take the place of new editions.[1503]

But 1527 and 1528 were stormy years for Erasmus, and as the Reformation in Basel became a certainty in 1529, his own insecurity may well have justified his dream; the likelihood of new editions of his scholarship seemed to him remote. Erasmus was, of course, in spite of the dream, quite wrong. He would publish revised editions of the *Paraphrases* on the apostolic Epistles in 1532, on the complete *Paraphrases* in 1534, on the Gospels and Acts in 1535, and a revised edition of the New Testament also in 1535, with major additions to the *Annotations*. There are, remarkably, very few allusions in his letters from 1529 to 1535 that permit us to trace in detail the course of his work in preparing and publishing these revisions, and there are only minimal hints to feed conjecture. Important as the final editions are to us, Erasmus no longer keeps them as a centre of interest in his correspondence.

The immediate catalyst for the revision of the *Paraphrases* may well have been the *Determinatio* of the Paris faculty of theology published in July 1531. Erasmus' response to the *Determinatio* was at the press by December and was published in January 1532. The *Determinatio* forced the *Paraphrases* once again to the forefront of Erasmus' engagements. While Erasmus was busy with the exoneration of his *Paraphrases* from the indictment of the theologians, he received from Maarten Lips a long letter at the end of which Lips offered barely a handful of suggestions for the improvement of the *Paraphrases* – three for the *Paraphrase on Romans*, two for the dedicatory letter to the *Paraphrase* on the two Corinthians. It is possible that Lips was just then responding to a request for comments made as long ago as 1525, or that the request had recently been renewed.[1504] This sequence perhaps suggests that Erasmus, having received the Paris *Determinatio* and recognizing the hand of Béda everywhere, considered afresh a new edition of the *Paraphrases* with revisions, beginning with the apostolic Epistles. Certainly some of the revisions in it reflect the controversy with the Paris theologians, as we have

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1503 This preface appears in CWE as Ep 1807A 'To the Pious Reader' where, as the introduction notes, it is published 'for the first time in a modern edition.' Erasmus notes the 'good services of [his] enemies … whose hostile prejudice has made [his] *Paraphrases* more acceptable even to [himself].' While he believes he has responded adequately to their false accusations, he will 'make note here' of 'whatever lapses of the printers or copiers or of [his] own pen have occurred so that it will be easier for anyone who wishes to emend his own copy.'

1504 Cf Allen Ep 2566:226–56. For the request of 1525 see Ep 1547:18–19.

seen.[1505] The revised edition of the *Paraphrases* on the apostolic Epistles was published in 1532, apparently without any explicit reference in the extant letters to revision or publication. We fare little better in our search for epistolary references illuminating the progress of the revisions of 1534 and 1535, save for a fleeting allusion by Johann Herwagen, who in June 1534 was hoping to publish Erasmus' *Paraphrases*. Herwagen's request suggests that these new late editions may have been to some degree motivated by the desire of the press to capitalize on the abiding interest the *Paraphrases* held for a popular audience.[1506]

We cannot point to a definitive date when the resolve to produce a fifth edition of the New Testament took shape in Erasmus' mind. We may, however, find a hint buried deep in Erasmus' formal reply to Titelmans, published in October 1529. In a long note on Romans 5:12 Erasmus, speaking of the authority of some of the early synods, rather bravely protests that he will observe the authority of these synods only if 'godliness' is in jeopardy; he has shown and 'will show more fully in the future' that no such matter is at stake in the reading of Romans 5:12.[1507] The allusion in this promise is obscure, but the *1535* version of the annotation on Romans 5:12 covered with greater clarity this very point. Further, when in 1530 Titelmans wrote the preface to his book on the authority of Revelation, he urged Erasmus to revise his *Annotations* yet once again – in spite of four editions published – particularly since he had found a single annotation rife with errors.[1508] Titelmans' advice might well have hit its mark!

But if we owe much to Titelmans for another revision of the New Testament, there were no doubt ancillary incentives as well. Some of the Paris theologians' criticisms invited revisions in the annotations. But the continuing acquisition of Chrysostom's homilies in the Greek seems to have been of particular importance. During the 1520s Erasmus had increasingly exploited the riches of Chrysostom's homilies. Newly available manuscripts of the *Homilies* on Romans and 2 Corinthians had contributed enormously to the annotations on these two Epistles in the 1527 edition of the New Testament;

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1505 Cf 341–2 with nn1466, 1467 above.

1506 Cf Allen Ep 2945:34–5. Herwagen was to be disappointed; both the complete *Paraphrases* of 1534 and the *Paraphrases* on the Gospels and Acts of 1535 were published by the Froben-Episcopius Press. Cf Allen Ep 2945 introduction and 34n. On Herwagen see 'New Testament Scholarship' 360 with n1565.

1507 Cf *Responsio ad Collationes* CWE 73 194.

1508 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 335 with n1442.

however, Erasmus had acquired the Greek of the *Homilies* on 1 Corinthians and Galatians apparently too late for that edition. But in 1529 Gian Matteo Giberti, bishop of Verona, published in three volumes in Greek Chrysostom's *Homilies* on the Pauline Epistles. In August 1531 Erasmus still did not know whether it had been published.[1509] In May 1532, however, he learned that his friend Sadoleto had acquired a copy, and in October Germain de Brie, who had helped Erasmus on his Chrysostom edition, informed Erasmus that it was on sale in Paris and that he was in possession of it.[1510] We may assume that Erasmus himself would have also obtained the work about that time. Hitherto, his annotations on the Epistles from Galatians to 2 Thessalonians had been all but deprived of citations from Chrysostom; in the 1535 edition the deficiency was abundantly supplied with occasional specific references to Giberti's edition. The new availability of Chrysostom would undoubtedly have confirmed any intention that may have already emerged to produce a fifth edition of the New Testament. On 3 July 1534, less than a month after Herwagen's request for his *Paraphrases*, Erasmus reported that 'the New Testament is once again being printed with my annotations'; he wished that he had 'from the beginning applied adequate care to [his] annotations!'[1511] Several weeks later, in August 1534, he reported that the printing was almost finished when the work had to stop for lack of paper, but that it would be ready for the spring book fair of 1535.[1512] And indeed it was, having been published in March by Froben-Episcopius in Basel. Erasmus was still in Freiburg; this appears to be the only edition of the five for which Erasmus was not at the press to see the work through. This circumstance may well have prevented Erasmus from those last minute changes made, as in previous editions, while the presses were running.

We may then conjecture that many of the revisions to the 1535 New Testament were made between 1532, when Erasmus would have acquired the Verona Chrysostom, and the summer of 1534, when printing had begun. In fact, there is some slight evidence to suggest that, as in earlier editions, so in this last the most concentrated work was undertaken near the end of this period. It was sometime after March 1533, when he had written the

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1509 Cf Allen Ep 2526:9–12. Vague rumours perhaps of Giberti's publication seem to have reached Erasmus by mid-1530; cf Ep 2359:69–72.
1510 Cf Allen Epp 2648:17–20 (Sadoleto) and 2727:16–20 (de Brie).
1511 Cf Allen Ep 2951:12–15.
1512 Cf Allen Ep 2961:20–4.

dedicatory letter for the *Explanatio symboli*,[1513] that he realized that the ancient commentary on the Creed was the work not of Cyprian but of Rufinus, a realization that seems to have been associated with another similar clarification: that Rufinus, not Jerome, was the translator of Origen's commentary on Romans. These discoveries are described in *1535* additions to the annotations on 1 Corinthians 15:22 (*in Christo omnes vivificabuntur*) and Romans 3:5 ('is God unfair who inflicts wrath'). The correspondence with Sepúlveda points also to concentrated work in the later phase of preparation. Sepúlveda's letter of 23 October 1533 initiated a discussion on Galatians 4:25 that is clearly reflected in the *1535* addition to the annotation on that verse (*qui coniunctus est ei quae nunc est Hierus.*), and his claim in the same letter for the superiority of Codex Vaticanus over the manuscripts Erasmus had followed seems to be in Erasmus' mind in several mostly negative references to the Codex in *1535* additions to the annotations.[1514] A correction of the geographical location of Rhegium in the annotation on Acts 28:13 (*devenimus Rhegium*) may reflect Sepúlveda's even later letter of 23 May 1534.[1515]

**The *Paraphrases* of 1532: Revisions**

In 1525 Erasmus, clearly intending to publish a revised edition of the *Paraphrases*, wrote to Maarten Lips that he wished 'his work to be perfect in every respect.'[1516] The revisions of the *1532 Paraphrases* on the apostolic Epistles witness in many respects to this desire for a more polished product. In the first place, Erasmus recognized, as we have seen, the need to make corrections, notably simple corrections of fact, some of which had been pointed out by critics.[1517] In some cases Erasmus had not attended to the niceties of Greek

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1513 Dedicated to Thomas Boleyn, Allen Ep 2772 (c March 1533). When he wrote the *Explanatio symboli*, Erasmus believed that Cyprian was the author of this commentary; cf Allen Ep 2772:1–5 and CWE 70 235 n2. For the discovery of Rufinus as author of the commentary and translator of Origen see 'New Testament Scholarship' 370–1 with n1600.

1514 Cf 345 with n1486 above. Erasmus refers to Codex Vaticanus in eg the annotations on Mark 1:2 (*in Esaia propheta*) ASD VI-5 354:77–9 and Acts 27:16 (*quae vocatur Clauda*).

1515 For Sepúlveda's note on the mistake see Allen Ep 2938:42–50; Erasmus responded on 3 July 1534 that the correction had been made; cf Allen Ep 2951:20–1.

1516 Ep 1547:19; cf 347 with n1500.

1517 Perhaps most egregiously in the paraphrase on Phil 3:5, which prior to *1532* had declared that 'the priests were appointed from the tribe of Benjamin'; cf CWE 43 380 with n16; Bateman 'Textual Travail' 214–15 and 243–4.

grammar with sufficient care. Observing that 1 Corinthians 6:2 has a present tense ('is being judged'), not a future, Erasmus reoriented the paraphrase on the verse in *1532*, bringing to it an important ethical implication: Christians by their upright lives are now, in the present, bringing judgment to the world.[1518]

At some points Erasmus added a word, a phrase, or even a sentence to clarify the argument. A full sentence is added at the beginning of the paraphrase on Romans 2 to clarify the connection in the sequence of the Pauline argument as it moves from chapter 1 to chapter 2.[1519] A notable example of clarification may be found in a *1532* addition to the paraphrase on Philippians 2:17, where Paul endeavours to represent himself with emphatic clarity as both priest and victim, sacrificer and sacrifice.[1520] Elsewhere a sentence may be reconstructed to enhance the rhetorical balance of the phrases. To turn again to Romans 2: before *1532* the paraphrase on 2:7 had read: '… he will reward others with eternal life, I mean those who persevering in pious works seek not vain and fleeting rewards but true glory, honour, and immortality.' The *1532* revision reads: '… he will reward others with eternal life, I mean: to those who *now relying upon the evangelical promises* persevere in pious works, and seek not the vain and fleeting *advantages of the present life but eternal life in heaven, he will give eternal* glory *in place of temporary disgrace*, honour *in place of contempt*, immortality *in place of the despised life of the body*.'[1521] Generally clarification and rhetorical enhancement are confined to a word or phrase, and these are introduced frequently into the text of *1532*, accounting numerically for the great majority of revisions.

Erasmus also sought through additions and revisions to enrich the text of the *1532 Paraphrases*. Following his own advice in the *De copia*, he sprinkles through the text what are in effect 'commonplaces.'[1522] None is more striking than the description in the paraphrase on 1 Corinthians 11:7–9 of the differing

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1518 Cf CWE 43 75–6 with nn2, 3.

1519 Cf CWE 42 19 n1. Cf also the annotation on Rom 2:1 ('because of which'), where Erasmus attempts to construct the sequence of thought in the argument.

1520 Cf CWE 43 375 with nn37, 38. Compare the large *1535* addition to the paraphrase on 2 Cor 5:16 CWE 43 231 n18, where Erasmus undertakes to clarify the self-representation of Paul as apostle. Erasmus' abiding interest in the biography of Paul is noteworthy.

1521 Cf CWE 42 20 nn4, 5 (translation slightly modified). The first pair, 'reliance (ie faith) and works' clearly has theological implications, bringing into play the complementary nature of faith and charity.

1522 Cf *De copia* CWE 24 605, 636–8.

roles played by man and woman in marriage.[1523] Or he may enrich the text by drawing out further a semantic nuance, as in a small addition to the paraphrase on 1 Peter 4:13, where two Greek words expressing joy ('rejoice and be glad' RSV) had been paraphrased by 'exult with an indescribable joy,' 'indescribable' echoing 1 Peter 1:8. He elaborates this expression in *1532*: 'a joy that can be felt but not expressed in words.'[1524] We may hear Erasmus reflecting on his own experience in a short addition to the paraphrase on 1 Corinthians 6:7, where the paraphrastic Paul encourages Christians to settle their quarrels 'either by mutual concession or at least by arbitrators.'[1525] In 1528 Erasmus himself had submitted to arbitration in a nasty quarrel with Heinrich Eppendorf.[1526]

But perhaps the most important example of a revision that notably enriched the text is to be found in the paraphrase on Romans 1:7, where Paul in the biblical text desires for the Romans 'grace and peace.' Previous to *1532* the paraphrase had briefly elaborated the word for 'grace.' In *1532* the revision works out in detail the semantics of the word 'grace' and does so in a manner that provides an anticipatory summary of the foundational message of Romans: grace is the free gift of faith that justifies the sinner, enabling friendship with God since the hostility resulting from sin has been removed, creating a relationship derived not from philosophy or the Law but simply from divine generosity. This is, of course, not only a summary statement of the gospel as it is elaborated particularly in the first eight chapters of the Epistle, but it is as well a significant theological declaration. We should not, however, regard it as an exhibition piece of Erasmus' theological development. In 1520, a dozen years before the revision of 1532, Erasmus had paraphrased the same words in 1 Peter 1:2 in a very similar way, where, too, it serves as a prefatory statement of the thought of the Epistle.[1527]

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1523 Cf CWE 43 142 nn15, 17, the latter note offering helpful references to Aristotle among ancient writers, to Chomarat among modern scholars. For similar statements that function as commonplaces added in *1532* see eg the paraphrases on Col 2:12, 1 Tim 1:19, and 1 Cor 15:34–5, respectively in CWE 43 413 with n37, CWE 44 12 with n36, CWE 43 185 with n47.

1524 CWE 44 103 with n16.

1525 Cf CWE 43 78 with n12.

1526 For the settlement see Epp 1937 and 1941; and for the quarrel, Manfred Hoffmann's introduction to *Admonitio adversus mendacium* CWE 78 370–8. On Ulrich von Hutten, a central figure in the quarrel, see 'New Testament Scholarship' 76 and 371 with n1602.

1527 Cf CWE 44 82. It may be significant that in *1532* Erasmus changed the word *beneficentia* in the paraphrase on 1 Pet 1:2 to *munificentia* 'bounty,' the word found in the *1532* revision of Rom 1:7; cf CWE 44 82 n10.

In the *1532* revisions Erasmus shows himself clearly sensitive to the criticisms of more than a decade that had arisen from a variety of sources. Sometimes he merely qualifies controversial language. Some readers of the paraphrase on 1 Corinthians 14:16 had objected to the word *fabula* 'pageant'; Erasmus responded by adding the qualifying phrase 'so to speak.'[1528] Paraphrasing 2 Corinthians 5:21, he implicitly recognized the difficulty of the concept that Christ was made sin and added 'in some manner.'[1529] Occasionally he conceded a relatively minor point. In the paraphrase on 2 Timothy 2:15 he humoured López Zúñiga by adding the Vulgate's 'handling [the word of truth]' to his own preferred 'dividing.'[1530] And he deferred to Titelmans in Romans 15:22 by acknowledging that it was the divine will ultimately that prevented Paul from previously visiting Rome.[1531] Even Latomus was paid his due with a small addition that recognized the Vulgate reading in the paraphrase on 1 Corinthians 14:38.[1532]

The revisions and additions of *1532* also reveal, however, Erasmus' reflection on major theological problems. Perhaps no chapter in all the *Paraphrases* on the apostolic Epistles is more heavily revised than that of Romans 9. In the paraphrase on this chapter Erasmus revised: (1) to express more fully and precisely the Trinitarianism of Romans 9:5; (2) to modify his earlier paraphrastic narrative of verses 14–22 in order to confront afresh the problem of free will, or rather the lack thereof, and the justice of God; (3) to find occasion in the text of verses 28–9 to explain more carefully the nature of the Law and its relation to Christ.[1533] Christology did not escape Erasmus' notice, particularly in paraphrasing Philippians 2:6–9, where Erasmus' formulations had received the attention of both Lee and López Zúñiga; and

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1528 Cf CWE 43 167 with n20.

1529 Cf CWE 43 233 and the annotation on the verse (*eum qui non novit peccatum, fecit peccatum*), where as early as *1516* Erasmus had pointed to Lefèvre's interpretive difficulty with the passage.

1530 Cf CWE 44 46 with n7.

1531 Cf CWE 42 86 with n5 and *Responsio ad Collationes* CWE 73 255.

1532 Cf CWE 43 173 with n52.

1533 Cf CWE 42 53 with nn3, 4; 55–7 with nn15, 16, 17, 20; and 57–8 with n24, respectively. López Zúñiga had explicitly challenged Erasmus' interpretation of Rom 9:5 (ASD IX-2 128:382–6). Erasmus engaged Luther specifically on the problem of free will, and for the expression in the paraphrase here see *Hyperaspistes* 2 CWE 77 506–7; but note also Ep 1804:82–102. Béda and the Paris theologians had pressed Erasmus on his statements about the Mosaic law; cf eg *Elenchus in censuras Bedae* ASD IX-5 194:697–704 and *Supputatio* ibidem 464:822–474:49–67 (Béda), and CWE 82 90–113 (Paris theologians).

following the debate with Lefèvre, his annotation of *1519* on the verse (*esse se aequalem Deo*) had found ample augmentation. A relatively short addition in *1532* to the paraphrase on the verse confirmed the argument of the annotation: that Paul was speaking here not of the nature of Christ but of how he chose to appear in his ministry on earth.[1534]

We noted above that the Paris theologians, following Béda, had severely criticized Erasmus' *Paraphrases* on two major points of theology: his representation both of the Law and of the relation of faith and charity.[1535] The revisions of *1532* are clearly attentive to these criticisms. At numerous points Erasmus revised his paraphrases to formulate more clearly his understanding of the Law in the economy of salvation: the 'letter' of the Law to which the Hebrews were subject is contrasted with the spirit of the Law that abides for those under the new covenant;[1536] the Law points to Christ, whom it promised and who is its essence.[1537] A radical revision of the paraphrase on Hebrews 9:1 gave much greater respect to the rituals of the Mosaic law than the paraphrase had previously given.[1538]

We also observed above that on the subject of faith Erasmus attempted to distinguish himself from Luther by acknowledging 'works' as meritorious only after conversion, while faith was essential not only to the sinner before conversion but also to the Christian afterwards in his daily life, since faith and charity are inseparable companions.[1539] Erasmus clarifies his view by adding on occasion to his paraphrases the expression 'by faith' to indicate that it is by faith alone that the sins of the former life are forgiven, as in the paraphrase on Romans 1:7, but this is complemented by an insistent acknowledgment that faith also 'plays a principal role in pious deeds.'[1540] In the paraphrase on Romans 2:9–10 the reward comes to those who 'through faith have lived well'[1541] – clearly a faith active after conversion. Erasmus is careful in the *1532*

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1534 Cf CWE 43 372 with n19. For Lee see *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 2* (Note 189) CWE 72 303–4; for López Zúñiga, ASD IX-2 128:387–90; for Lefèvre, *Apologia ad Fabrum* CWE 83 31–6.

1535 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 340–1 with n1463.

1536 Cf the paraphrases on Rom 3:19, 8:6 and Gal 4:21, respectively CWE 42 24 with n9, 46 with n4, 119 with n16.

1537 Cf the paraphrases on Rom 2:27, 9:29 and Col 2:9, respectively CWE 42 22 with n12, 58 with n24, CWE 43 412 with n22.

1538 Cf CWE 44 235 with n1.

1539 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 341 with n1464.

1540 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 340–2 with nn1462, 1467.

1541 Cf CWE 42 20 with n6.

revisions to link more closely than previously the twin virtues of faith and charity. In the paraphrase on Romans 2:7 we might easily slip over the addition 'relying on the promises of the gospel,' but it should be regarded as a reference to faith made to complement the notion of charity already embodied in the phrase 'persevere in pious works.'[1542] In the paraphrase on Romans 10:15 the faith that justifies is newly coupled with the charity that brings peace.[1543] A small revision in the paraphrase on James 2:26 attempts to clarify the relation between faith and charity.[1544] And an important addition to the paraphrase on 1 Corinthians 13:8 acknowledges that while faith will no longer be needed in the heavenly world, charity 'towards souls' will remain.[1545] While these revisions accenting the role of faith may in large part look to the challenge of the Paris theologians, Erasmus would certainly have understood the congruity of the word 'faith' with the concerns of the reform movement.

## The *Paraphrases* of 1534 and 1535

Of the last two authorized editions of the *Paraphrases*, the 1535 publication was a folio edition of the *Paraphrases* on the Gospels and Acts, evidently intended to correspond to the 1532 folio edition of the *Paraphrases* on the apostolic Epistles.[1546] It followed closely the text of the 1534 *Paraphrases* with only a few minor changes. Our greater interest therefore attaches to the edition of 1534.

The book itself is of some interest, to appreciate which it will be useful to review some of the early collected editions of the *Paraphrases* published by Johann Froben.[1547] The 1534 edition appeared in the popular octavo size with

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1542 Cf CWE 42 20 with n4.

1543 Cf CWE 42 61 with n8. The translation in CWE 42 may obscure the sense; I would prefer the construction: '[The apostles are ordered to preach] peace, which, after our sins have been abolished through faith, welds us together by mutual love.'

1544 Cf CWE 44 153 with n32.

1545 Cf CWE 43 160 with n15. Cf also the interesting addition of 'faith' to 'charity' in the paraphrase on Eph 1:4 CWE 43 304 with n14.

1546 In fact, however, the 1535 edition was complemented by another folio edition of the *Paraphrases* on the apostolic Epistles published posthumously in 1538.

1547 Except for the group of Epistles from Timothy to Philemon (published by Hillen in Antwerp), the first editions of the *Paraphrases* on the Epistles were published by Dirk Martens in quarto volumes; normally within a short time Froben followed these publications with editions in both quarto and octavo. For the early collected editions in folio see n1553 below.

italic print. It was 'the only edition [published] in Erasmus' lifetime to contain both the *Tomus primus* and the *Tomus secundus*.'[1548] Johann Froben began to publish collected editions in octavo with the *Paraphrases on All* [*omnes*] *the Apostolic Epistles* in 1521, and further editions followed in 1522 and 1523.[1549] Prefaces were brief: in *1521* a title page with a brief script, on the next page a table of contents; in *1522* a title page presented as a letter of Froben 'To the Reader' and a table of contents; in *1523* a title page (pointing clearly to this volume as the *Tomus secundus*) followed by a new and different letter of Froben 'To the Pious Reader.'[1550] In all three octavo editions decorative borders surrounded (with a few exceptions) the initial page of each *Paraphrase*, and the initial letter of the first word of each book paraphrased was set in a large decorative block. In the editions of 1521, 1522, and 1523 Arabic numerals were not used in pagination, but the quires were identified in alphabetic sequence. In 1523 chapter numbers were introduced and placed on the top of each leaf on the recto side.[1551] But perhaps the most striking feature of these editions was their division into self-contained units, that is, into separable smaller books within the larger book, a pattern that would have facilitated the distribution of individual parts of the book. Thus in the 1521 edition there are a title page and a table of contents for the entire book of collected *Paraphrases*, with a colophon after 2 Thessalonians, a second title page including table of contents for 2 Timothy to 3 John with a publication date after

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1548 Bateman 'Textual Travail' 245. On *Tomus primus* and *Tomus secundus* see 'New Testament Scholarship' 227 with n918.

1549 In the May 1522 edition, *universas* takes the place of *omnes* in the title, without significant change in meaning. In 1522 and 1523 there were both octavo and folio editions published; for the folio editions see n1553 below.

1550 'Good reader, the Greek proverb rightly observes that fine things are repeated more than once, for the more frequently things that are honourable in their own right are brought before the eyes, the more they please, and no one becomes sated with anything that offers perpetual advantage. So then, once again we publish the *Paraphrases* of Erasmus on all the apostolic Epistles. All good and learned people are agreed that nothing is more sacred or useful than to read these. In this edition the greatest care possible has been taken: the originals have been diligently revised by the author, and well-trained scholars have with careful attention placed the chapter numbers on every page, to the great advantage of the reader. Farewell, reader, and support our efforts with your good will.' This letter appeared also in the 1523 and 1532 folio volumes and in the 1534 octavo volume.

1551 In the 1534 octavo edition, however, Arabic numbers were used to define the pagination. Froben's letter of 1523 'To the Reader' makes a special point of the introduction of chapter numbers in that edition; cf n1550 above.

Philemon, a third title page including a table of contents for the Catholic Epistles with a colophon after 3 John, and a fourth title page for Hebrews with a colophon at the end.[1552] As portions of the whole, the smaller books, each with its own title page, would be a convenience to the reader, as the volume with all the *Paraphrases* on the apostolic Epistles was enormous – in *1521* 476 leaves or 952 pages.[1553]

In the 1534 edition the *Tomus primus* and the *Tomus secundus* were organized as separate volumes.[1554] Hieronymus Froben and Nicolaus Episcopius abandoned the decorative features that had enhanced the octavo volumes of Johann Froben: there were no borders, and in place of the historiated inaugural letter on the first page of paraphrase for each New Testament book in the earlier editions, there was simply a large block vacant except for a small italic capital letter at the centre of otherwise empty space. The *Tomus primus* was set, however, so that each *Paraphrase* could be distributed separately: Matthew was framed by the title page for the entire volume and by the colophon, and each of the other Gospels and Acts began with its own title page and ended with a colophon. Moreover, each of the Gospels and Acts was paginated separately with Arabic numerals.[1555] The *Tomus secundus* began with a simple title page, followed by Froben's 'Letter to the Reader,' and then ran to 924 pages with the colophon thereafter. There are no obvious indications of separable parts as in the earlier octavo editions of the *Paraphrases* on the apostolic Epistles. While parts might be artificially separated, the *Tomus secundus* of 1534 was evidently expected to be sold as a whole. All of these volumes retained the marginalia of earlier editions.[1556]

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1552 The addition of Hebrews was perhaps an afterthought; it is not included in the initial table of contents; cf CWE 42 xxii–xxiii. The 1522 and 1523 editions were divided into only two parts, a colophon placed in both editions after Galatians and a new title page preceding Ephesians.

1553 Cf CWE 42 xxii–xxiii. Johann Froben published the *Paraphrases* on all the apostolic Epistles in folio volumes also, in 1522 (with the first edition of the *Paraphrase on Matthew* included in the same volume), in 1523, and in 1532; cf nn1547, 1549 above. They were designed as a single (indivisible) book, each about 450 pages enumerated by Arabic numbers, in roman script; they were without the decorative features of the octavo editions and were prefaced by a title page and in *1523* and *1532* by the letter of Froben 'To the reader.' They were clearly not intended as popular 'carry-around' books.

1554 Cf CWE 42 xxvii: 'The Froben publication [of the complete *Paraphrases*] was always organized as two volumes …'

1555 Taken together, the Gospels ran to nearly 1600 pages: Matthew (including the preface 'To the Reader') 366 pages, Mark 302 pages, Luke 527 pages, John (including the afterward 'To the Reader') 399 pages.

1556 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 336 with n1446.

In this octavo edition of 1534 the *Paraphrases* on the apostolic Epistles were 'essentially a reprint of the 1532 [folio] edition,' and the very few changes 'seem to be mistakes made by the typesetter.'[1557] There were, however, significant changes in the *Paraphrases* on the Gospels and Acts. By far the largest number of these was made in the *Paraphrase on Matthew* – in fact well over 150.[1558] By contrast, not more than fifty substantial changes appear in the *Paraphrases* on the other books together.[1559] It is possible that Erasmus began his revision with Matthew, intending a reasonably careful revision of the Gospels and Acts, but lacked either time or energy to do more than a touch up of the remaining books of the *Tomus primus*.

The changes, both the many in Matthew and the few in the other books, reflect an intent similar to that evident in the *1532* revision of the *Paraphrases* on the apostolic Epistles. Some make corrections, including those Béda had pointed out long ago.[1560] Some seek narrative enhancement, some attempt to achieve greater fidelity to the biblical text, and some explore the hermeneutical significance of the biblical text. I shall briefly point here to four of particular interest.

In paraphrasing the narrative of the temptation of Christ (Matthew 4:3–10), Erasmus added for all three temptations a short but carefully elaborated analogy to 'the first Adam,' relating each temptation specifically to one of the 'diseases of the soul': lust (food), ambition (temple exhibitionism), and greed (worldly kingdoms). The explicit contrast, in itself a rhetorical enhancement, places the 'temptation' clearly within the scheme of salvation-history and gives force to the words that preface the paraphrastic narrative and that point to Christ as the exemplar for preachers.[1561] In the paraphrase on the account of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the disciples bring

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1557 Bateman 'Textual Travail' 245

1558 This does not include the twenty instances where Latin *is* is replaced by *hic*, both demonstrative pronouns; cf CWE 45 110 n110. We may observe that already in the 1529 list of corrections (*Loca quaedam emendata*; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 347 with n1498), by far the largest number of corrections noted was in the *Paraphrase on Matthew*.

1559 The count is based on the evidence provided by the volumes in CWE, where the notes do not include minor changes that have no effect on the translation.

1560 Cf eg the rather clever change in the paraphrase on Matt 2:22 CWE 45 56 with n33; also the change in the paraphrase on Matt 4:2 CWE 45 73 with n10. Many of the corrections acknowledged in the list that followed the *Supputatio* of 1527 (cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 348 with n1503) now are incorporated into the text of the 1534 *Tomus primus*.

1561 Cf CWE 45 73–5 with nn13, 14, 18. The expression 'diseases of the soul' is also a revision of earlier editions that read 'things'; cf ibidem n9.

to Jesus both an ass and a colt (Matthew 21:2–7). Prior to *1534* Erasmus had in paraphrase placed Jesus on the colt, interpreting the act in traditional allegorical terms, but had omitted any mention of the ass – either an oversight or because Jesus could not have sat on both animals at once. But the omission was rectified in *1534* with further allegorical interpretation: as the colt represented the gentiles, so the ass represented the Jews. Jesus remains on the colt, but Erasmus, observing carefully the gospel narrative, has both animals 'bear the apostolic garments.'[1562] Again, it was not until *1534* that Erasmus clarified in paraphrase the topographical confusion in the biblical textual tradition of Jesus' movements on the night of his betrayal and trial: Jesus was first taken to Annas, then to Caiaphas, and from Caiaphas to Pilate. Further clarification came with the *1535* edition.[1563] Finally, we should note a rather remarkable addition to the paraphrase on Matthew 3:12, where John the Baptist is made to say in editions prior to that of 1534 that the choice to be either 'chaff or pure wheat' was 'in your hands.' In *1534* Erasmus inserted the word 'partly' – 'partly in your hands' – thus inviting us to reflect on the *1532* revision of his paraphrase on Romans 9:16, where he had eliminated an original sentence that had stated that in acceptance and rejection by God 'some part of it depends on our own will and effort.'[1564]

## The New Testament of 1535

### *Publisher and Book: the Old and the New*

The New Testament of 1535, the last to be published during Erasmus' lifetime, was the first edition to be published after the death of Johann Froben late in 1527. It was published by the Froben Press, now under the direction of Hieronymus Froben, Johann's son, and Nicolaus Episcopius, Hieronymus' brother-in-law.[1565] Both men were exact contemporaries, in their mid-thirties

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1562 Cf CWE 45 292–3 with n17, and for the interpretation, nn11–14.

1563 For the biblical story see John 18:13–28; for the paraphrase, CWE 46 200–4, and for the paraphrastic clarification, nn20, 25, 32, and 39.

1564 See CWE 45 66 with n39; for the reference to Rom 9:16, CWE 42 55 with n15; and for 'free will,' 'New Testament Scholarship' 354 with n1533.

1565 After Johann's death, Hieronymus Froben continued his father's business with Johann Herwagen, now husband of Johann Froben's widow. Herwagen had established his own business in 1531, and Episcopius, brother-in-law of Hieronymus since 1529, now joined the latter in a partnership that published the *Paraphrases* of 1532, 1534, and 1535 and would publish the New Testament

in 1535. Hieronymus had been devoted to his father's business from an early age, but Nicolaus, having joined the firm in 1529, was relatively new. In general conception the edition followed previous editions: a two-volume work with prefaces and text / translation in volume 1, annotations and subject index in volume 2. In the first volume the biblical text had returned to the pattern prior to 1527: the Vulgate was omitted, and the Latin and Greek appeared in two separate columns on each page. Although the volume lacked both borders and markers to separate the individual books, the text itself may nevertheless appear to the eye as neater and more spacious than that in former editions. This is due in part to a new Greek font that Erasmus advertised as a 'considerable improvement,' acquired by the press at his suggestion.[1566] As in earlier editions, the Greek text was presented continuously without indented paragraphs in the Gospels but was broken by paragraphs in the Epistles.[1567] In the latter the rather dense Greek text served to accent the space between the paragraphs. Thus the biblical text acquired a pleasing appearance. The *Annotations* volume was considerably enlarged, extending to 783 pages, exclusive of the traditional prefatory letter of Erasmus.[1568] With some exceptions, the annotations were printed in well-demarcated paragraphs, one paragraph for each annotation.

## *Volume 1*

### 1/ THE PREFACES

In the material that prefaced the *1535* text of the New Testament there was both continuity with and significant departure from previous editions. The title page continued to display the traditional printer's device of the Froben Press and below it the Greek / Latin couplet as in *1527*, but only a very brief text amplified the title.[1569] The letters from Leo X to Erasmus and Erasmus to

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of 1535. Hieronymus Froben was the 'nice young man' to whom Erasmus had entrusted an important mission in the search for manuscripts in 1526; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 288 with n1222 and CEBR II 58–60; for Herwagen see 'New Testament Scholarship' 349 with n1506; for Nicolaus Episcopius, CEBR I 437–8.

1566 Cf Ep 2062:23–4.

1567 In the Gospels the Eusebian chapters were distinguished by asterisks in the text, as in previous editions.

1568 The *1535 Annotations* was larger than that of *1527* by seventy-three pages, or approximately 10 per cent. In both editions of the *Annotations* there were fifty-three lines to a page and on average the same number of words per line.

1569 Compare the title pages of the editions of 1527 and 1535 in 'Title Pages' 750–3.

Leo followed. Of the major essays that had at one time appeared as prefaces, only the *Apologia* and the *Contra morosos* were retained in *1535*. Minor revisions were made to the former, but significant additions were made in the latter. The Eusebian canon continued to find its usual place. As Erasmus indicated in the brief letter prefatory to the subject index at the end of the second volume, he had decided to omit from this volume the indexes that from *1519* had cited specifically the Translator's faults, since people had found them so offensive.[1570]

Of the important additions to the *Contra morosos* three in particular should be noted. First, Erasmus extends the discussion on the translator of the Vulgate by more than a page, directing the focus away from the authority of the Translator to the authority of the text of Scripture, an authority that resides not in the special inspiration of the Translator but in the biblical text's canonicity. The words of Scripture have authority because the church has accepted as canonical the books in which they are found. Even if new letters from Paul were to be discovered, we would not 'be forced to embrace them as oracles of the Holy Spirit,'[1571] because they lie outside the canonical books. Second, Erasmus insists once again that agreement between the text of Codex Vaticanus and the Vulgate was due to the fact that the former had been conformed to the latter. As he had contended in his letter of July 1534, he explains in the *Contra morosos* that his manuscript tradition agreed with that represented by a manuscript whose readings were evident in the Spanish Polyglot Bible and which Cardinal Jiménez de Cisneros had received from the Vatican Library. But Erasmus also appealed to the 'Golden Bull,' an appeal that he had acknowledged in July 1534 was invalid, which suggests that he composed this addition to the *Contra morosos* before the summer of 1534.[1572] Finally, we may be surprised that in the long list of supporting witnesses that had

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1570 In a brief 'Letter to the Reader' that immediately preceded the subject index in the 1535 edition, Erasmus wrote that 'in previous editions in order to counter the shameless clamour of my critics' he had 'appended lists indicating inept renderings … corruptions … passages misunderstood.' But he had found that 'there are those … oversensitive souls who think it the utmost cruelty … to malign the Translator in lists and annotations.' He concluded, 'So to keep these people quieter, from now on I have omitted those "uncivilized" lists.' Cf 'Prefaces and Letters' 781.

1571 Cf *Contra morosos* paragraphs 27a–j; for the quotation see paragraph 27d.

1572 Cf *Contra morosos* paragraph 41a; also Allen Ep 2951:49–57 (3 July 1534) and 'New Testament Scholarship' 345 with n1486.

previously concluded this preface Erasmus retained the name of Cardinal Wolsey, disgraced and dead since 1530. It is not surprising that he included the name of the new archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, who had continued the generosity towards him manifested by William Warham. And at long last he gives his due in this preface to the bishop of Lincoln, John Longland, 'famous for the books he [had] published,' but perhaps more to the point, a generous patron of Erasmus, having sent Erasmus money regularly, it seems, since at least 1526 and as late as September 1535.[1573]

**2/** TEXT AND TRANSLATION

There are few surprises in the Greek text printed in *1535*. One finds changes in capitalization and spelling, corrections of old and minor mistakes, though new mistakes in printing also appear. Of changes in spelling, one notes with some interest the apparent attempt to standardize the spelling of 'Moses,' a name that had been spelled variously in previous editions.[1574]

In the Latin translation of *1535* Erasmus made fewer than two dozen significant changes from the edition of 1527, and of these little more than half a dozen appear in the Gospels. One feature in these changes deserves note: in several cases Erasmus adopts for his translation for the first time interpretations he had expounded in annotations he had written long ago for the first edition. In *1516* in the annotation on Luke 16:26 (*neque inde*) Erasmus had observed that in proper Latin *istinc* 'from there where you are' reflects the relation of the speaker, as the Vulgate's *inde* 'from there' does not. Only in *1535* did he replace in his translation the Vulgate's *inde* with *istinc*. In the case of Ephesians 2:2 the problem was one of sentence construction. Erasmus had translated, 'the presence of the power of the air, which is the spirit now at work in the children of disobedience.' In his *1516* annotation (*potestatis aeris huius spiritus*) he recognized this as syntactically correct but complained that it encouraged the interpretation that the 'air' is at work; instead he recommended the translation, 'the prince to whom is the power of the air and

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1573 The names cited here are found in *Contra morosos* paragraph 110c. For Longland's patronage see Ep 1758:5–6, Allen Epp 3058:13–18 and 3104:16–20. Erasmus had dedicated two of his psalm expositions to Longland (Psalms 4 and 85; cf Epp 1535 [1525] and 2017 [1528]), but Longland had evidently been critical of Erasmus' *Colloquies* and perhaps some other works; cf Ep 1704:24–46 with n8 and Ep 2037.

1574 See eg the critical apparatus in ASD VI-2 268–78 and ASD VI-3 358–62 for the name in, respectively, Acts 7 and 2 Corinthians 3.

the spirit of him who works in the children of disobedience.' This became the translation in the text first in *1535*.[1575] Another change was unexpectedly slow in coming. In Erasmus' bitter response to Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples (1517) on the interpretation of Hebrews 2:7 and 9, he had followed his annotation on 2:7 (*minuisti eum paulominus ab angelis*) and attempted to demonstrate at some length that the Greek *βραχύ τι* 'a little' was best understood to refer to time: Christ lowered himself for a short time.[1576] From *1516* he had, it is true, made a modest change from the Vulgate, adopting somewhat ambiguous terms *paululo* and *pusillum*. Only in *1535*, however, did he make his own position obvious by substituting in both 2:7 and 2:9 *paulisper* 'for a short time.'

One change comes with an interesting story, often told. Erasmus' Greek text of Acts 6:8 had always read, 'Stephen, a man full of *faith* and power,' but in his translation Erasmus had carelessly followed the Vulgate, 'Stephen, a man full of *grace* and power.'[1577] It was Ambrosius Pelargus who in 1531 alerted Erasmus to the error. Erasmus had sent Pelargus a copy of his recently published *Apophthegmata*.[1578] Pelargus, since he had nothing else to offer Erasmus in return, responded with a 'trifling gift' that would, however, have importance to Erasmus. This gift was a *fabula* 'a story.' The story goes that on St Stephen's Day in a church near Stuttgart, a Franciscan, intent to honour the first Christian martyr, was about to preach from Acts 6:8, announcing the text as 'Stephen, full of *grace* and power.' A 'preacher,' that is, a Lutheran who knew a little Greek, was present and openly objected: the text, he averred, was 'Stephen, full of *faith* and power.' The Franciscan, though he did not know Greek, nevertheless appealed to the 'authority of Erasmus, a brilliant Greek scholar.' The two nearly came to blows, members of the congregation cheering on the side they favoured, until a rumbling was heard in the building and all feared its collapse. In the sequel, the Franciscan sued the Lutheran, who failed to appear at the trial. The judge 'consoled' the Franciscan and wished him better luck next time. The story had its effect: in *1535* Erasmus changed the translation to match his Greek text![1579]

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1575 The paraphrase on the verse had assumed this interpretation; cf CWE 43 312–13.
1576 Cf *Apologia ad Fabrum* CWE 83 60–7.
1577 The modern preferred reading: 'Stephen full of grace and power' (RSV)
1578 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 325 with n1380.
1579 Ep 2471 (March 1531)

*Volume II: The* Annotations

**1/** GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

The remarkable revisions and additions in *1535* to the annotations on Romans and to a lesser extent on 1 Corinthians may lead the reader to expect rather more of the 1535 edition as a whole than it delivers. Considered as a whole, the 1535 edition of the *Annotations* will not appear to diligent readers as the climactic one in the sequence of five. It does, indeed, extend the 1527 edition by seventy-three pages, but more than half the enlargement occurs in the annotations on Romans and 1 Corinthians.[1580] Elsewhere in the *Annotations* the vast majority of insertions are relatively brief, while fewer than fifty new annotations, including those on Romans and 1 Corinthians, were added in *1535*, compared to well over one hundred added in *1522* and again in *1527*. The *1535* additions tend to diminish in the later canonical books, particularly in the Catholic Epistles, where there are no new annotations in *1535* and less than twenty insertions in those already existing, all very brief except for two.[1581]

The *1535* revision suggests that in this final edition Erasmus did not depart from the conception of his work on the New Testament that he had held from the beginning: his was the work of a philologist providing the foundation for theology. Characteristically, he took advantage of the new edition to improve and correct previous editions. General references were on occasion given more precision. It is a matter of interest, if not of importance, that this edition undertook to complete many cue phrases (lemmata) that had been previously abbreviated. There were also corrections of, for example, orthography and geography,[1582] and of a curious mistake in the *1519* annotation on 1 Corinthians 1:18 (*Dei virtus est*), only now caught. In this annotation Erasmus had written: '"Power" is opposed to weakness and powerlessness, because the Romans were swollen with pride in their glorious empire and their

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1580 For the annotations on Romans, twenty-eight additional pages; for those on 1 Corinthians, fifteen additional pages. Cf n1568 above.

1581 The annotations on 1 Pet 5:13 (*in Babylone collecta*) and 1 John 5:7–8 (*tres sunt testimonium dant in coelo*)

1582 Cf eg the spelling of Beroea (RSV) (annotation on Acts 17:10 [d*emiserunt Paulum et Silam*]); the annotations on Acts 28:13 (*devenimus Rhegium*) and on Titus 3:12 (*festina*) correct interesting lapses in geography – in previous editions Erasmus had placed Rhegium in Sicily and Nicopolis in Thrace, and in both cases his mistake had been noted by Sepúlveda, cf Allen Ep 2951:20–1, 24–8.

military renown.' Had Erasmus momentarily forgotten that he was annotating the Epistle to the Corinthians, not to the Romans? In *1535* the mistake was corrected with a skilful addition: '"Power" is opposed to weakness and powerlessness because the Corinthians were arrogant on account of their wealth, just as the Romans were swollen with pride …'[1583]

The *1535* additions follow generally, in the manner of previous editions, as philological comments on the text of Scripture. Thus some additions undertake to construe the text particularly where it is problematic. Others illuminate the text by the exposition of its language: Erasmus considers the etymology of biblical words, points to their semantic content, elucidates the images implied, discusses ambiguities. The style of the biblical writers is not entirely neglected, but – in contrast to the emphasis given to style in the fourth edition – style receives in the additions to this fifth edition only very occasionally a brief comment: a few observations on the 'emphasis' of a word, the grace or pleasure of an expression, a difficult hyperbaton, and Paul's lack of skill in speaking Greek is mentioned once again.[1584] The defence of standard Latin receives attention. There is no persistent attempt to identify solecisms, but the solecizing habit of the Vulgate Translator could not have been far from Erasmus' mind, as an addition to the annotation on Acts 10:16 (*per ter*) clearly indicates: 'Someone has defended the solecism in this passage because the Translator rendered the Greek idiom … But to render the Greek idiom in Latin often is to solecize.'[1585] The standard classical Latin authors are referenced in great abundance, likewise Greek authors, the former often as the touchstone of good Latin, the latter as authority for the significance of a Greek expression – in both cases following the practice established in previous editions. Indeed, Erasmus' appeal to the classics in *1535* at points extends so far as to suggest a still lively interest in antiquarian lore for its own sake, as in the lengthy addition to the annotation on

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1583 The mistake could also be explained as a printer's omission! The mistake appears corrected also in the *Loca quaedam emendata* ASD VI-8 52:182 (critical apparatus); cf n1498.

1584 Cf the annotations on Eph 2:4 (*Deus autem qui dives est*) and 2 Cor 2:13 (*non habeo requiem spiritui meo*) where Erasmus, referring to Jerome, suggests that Paul, because of his inability to express worthily the divine majesty, employed Titus as his amanuensis!

1585 In the annotations on Romans several solecisms are identified, inevitably in response to Titelmans. On Titelmans attempt to redefine 'solecism' see 'New Testament Scholarship' 333–4 with n1435.

1 Corinthians 4:13 (*omnium peripsema*), where Erasmus attempts to explain the words *περικαθάρματα* and *περίψημα*.[1586]

Long ago, in the 1519 edition of the *Ratio*, Erasmus had stressed that a fruitful reading of Scripture required a knowledge of the objects of which it spoke. He had also acknowledged that there were difficulties in Scripture that the reader should attempt to resolve as far as possible. Both were concerns of the philologian, and in the successive editions of the *Annotations* Erasmus had responded to both.[1587] The fifth edition was to be no exception; indeed in some annotations Erasmus made strenuous efforts to go beyond what he had previously written. He added nearly a page to the annotation on Matthew 3:4 (*esca autem*) to define precisely the nature of the 'locusts' John the Baptist ate, and in a lengthy paragraph added to the annotation on Hebrews 11:21 (*et adoravit fastigium virgae illius*)[1588] he reconstructed the deathbed scene of Jacob in order to bring clarity to Jacob's action. In the *1527* annotations Erasmus had given short shrift to the identification of the Herods, 'regarding it not worth the effort to burden the annotations with such difficulties.'[1589] He made amends in *1535*, repeatedly explaining in clarifying detail the relationship among the various Herods, whose common name invited confusion.[1590] Some objects found their proper identification only when they were recognized as biblical tropes: the 'fire' of 1 Corinthians 3:13, the 'thorn in the flesh' of 2 Corinthians 12:7.[1591] Erasmus also continued to address difficulties aris-

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1586 Respectively 'refuse' and 'offscouring' (RSV), 'rubbish' and 'dregs' (NRSV). However, the somewhat excessive appeal to classical lore was apparently motivated in part by criticism from both Jacques Toussain and Guillaume Budé; cf Ep 2291:35–43 with nn21, 22. Cf a similar extended appeal to the classics in the annotation on Mark 6:9 (*calceatos sandaliis*).

1587 Cf *Ratio* 501–5 (knowledge of objects) and 557–9 with n362 (difficulties in Scripture).

1588 'Jacob bowed in worship over the top of his staff'; cf RSV and NRSV.

1589 Cf the annotation on Acts 12:1 (*misit Herodes rex*) ASD VI-6 257:822–35 (critical apparatus).

1590 Cf the annotations on Matt 2:18 (*ploratus et ululatus*) commenting on *audiens* in 2:22 ('when he heard'), Matt 14:3 (*Herodiadem*), Matt 16:13 (*Caesareae Philippi*), Mark 6:20 (*Herodes autem metuebat*), Luke 3:1 (*procurante Pontio*), and especially Acts 12:1 (preceding note).

1591 Cf the annotations on 1 Cor 3:12 (*foenum, stipulam*) and 2 Cor 12:7 (*et ne magnitudo*). In *1519* Erasmus included 1 Cor 3:12–15 among the 'Obscure Passages' in which 'translators of great renown' had gone astray; cf 'Obscure Passages' #20 in 'Errors in the Vulgate' 892. A large addition was made to the annotation in *1535*.

ing from apparent inconsistencies in Scripture, introducing new annotations and adding to former comments: How could John the Baptist say that he did not know Christ until after the dove had descended on him at the baptism (John 1:33), when he had already said to Jesus before the baptism that he was unworthy to baptize him? How can one correlate the story of the call of the disciples recorded in Mark 1:16–20 with that in Luke 5:1–11? How does one harmonize the synoptic accounts, when they record Jesus' injunction to his disciples concerning the equipment for their mission: in Matthew and Luke he permits no equipment (Matthew 10:9–10; Luke 9:3–4), in Mark he permits some (Mark 6:8–9)? How could Jesus promise the repentant thief that 'today' he would be in Paradise with him (Luke 23:43), when that day Jesus was in Hades, his body in the tomb?[1592] A particularly interesting example arises from the inconsistency among the Gospels in the place of Peter's three denials at the trial of Jesus.[1593] In the annotation on John 18:28 (*adducunt ergo Iesum ad Caiapham in praetorium*), Erasmus had noted the difficulty presented by the language in tracing Jesus' movements from Gethsemane to the governor's presidium and in *1527* had added an explanation; however, he did not relate the problem to the denials of Peter until, apparently, the annotations on the chapter had been printed, forcing him to add an appendix in which he discussed in detail the two related problems. In *1535* he copied his comments in the appendix verbatim into the annotation on John 18:12 (*cohors autem et tribunus*).

### 2/ POINTS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

Throughout the editions of the *Annotations* from 1516 to 1527, Erasmus, as we have seen, never hesitated when opportunity presented itself to comment on church and society, morals and manners, doctrine and theology. He delivered his thoughts sometimes in long and passionate excursus, sometimes in brief tangential statements, adding zest to the text through irony and sarcasm. The 1535 edition continues to augment this engaging feature. We have become familiar with the technique, and we need not labour to review such

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1592 Cf the annotations on John 1:33 (*ego nesciebam eum*), Mark 1:20 (*secuti sunt eum*), Mark 6:9 (*calceatos sandaliis*), Luke 23:43 (*amen dico tibi hodie mecum eris in paradiso*). For the solution of biblical problems as an aspect of the annotations see 'New Testament Scholarship' 54 with n234 with n568; and for a long list of these in the *Ratio* see n1587 above.

1593 In the synoptic Gospels all occur in the house of Caiaphas; in John, Peter denies first in the house of Annas, then twice in the house of Caiaphas; cf Matt 26:57–75; Mark 14:53–72; Luke 22:54–62; John 18:13–27.

passages systematically throughout the fifth edition. I shall rather observe a few points of interest that invite attention.

(i) The monks, though perhaps less frequently attacked in the *1535* additions than previously, are nevertheless excoriated for their mendicity and false claims to poverty in a completely new annotation of more than two pages on Mark 6:9 (*calceatos sandaliis*). In the first annotation on the same chapter (*faber filius Mariae*) Erasmus warns against the 'superstitious' practice of those who want to be called 'Jesuits,'[1594] and who in monasteries practise the carpenter's craft, wearing on their garments the sign of the hammer.

(ii) Erasmus criticizes the order of the mass as sung with its then current improprieties. He concludes the annotation with the comment that these improprieties 'are not ungodly but depart from the gravity of the primitive liturgy … and lead to superstition' (annotation on Luke 2:14 [*hominibus bonae voluntatis*]).

(iii) To the long annotation on 1 Corinthians 7:39 (*liberata est a lege, cui autem vult, nubat*) a paragraph is added in *1535* condemning the ecclesiastical constitution by which a spouse is forced to delay the consummation of the marriage if the partner should consider making his profession as a monk.[1595]

(iv) Erasmus' Trinitarianism continues to be an issue in the *1535 Annotations*, as additions to the annotations on Romans 9:5 and 1 John 5:7–8 (the Johannine comma) indicate. Remarkably, in a new annotation on John 14:28 (*quia pater maior me est*) Erasmus expresses the relation of the Persons of the Trinity in language that can trace its origin as theological terms back as far as Tertullian. Of this relation Erasmus wrote, 'While there is distinction [of the Persons], there is no diversity'; Tertullian had said, *quemadmodum distinctio est, diversitas nulla est* 'As there is distinction, there is no diversity.'[1596]

(v) An addition to the annotation on Titus 2:12 (*abnegantes*) directs a short but telling comment on the pressing subject of grace and merits: 'This is a

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1594 Not to be confused with the Society of Jesus established in 1540; cf ASD VI-5 383:810–11n.

1595 Cf ASD VI-8 186:543–188:557 (in Reeve-Screech 479–80).

1596 Tertullian *Adversus Praxean* 9.1. Tertullian's writings had provided an important precedent in the formulation of a theological vocabulary in the West.

passage that those should carefully note who, improperly relying on grace, neglect good works, since grace delivers us from our sins so that we might henceforth be free for good works.'

(vi) Among the additions to the annotation on Matthew 3:4 (*esca autem*) Erasmus found occasion to criticize the 'pagan mentality' of those 'who think much more highly of the monuments of pagan antiquity surviving [in Rome] than of sacred places,' a remark that may reflect Erasmus' alienation in later life from Roman intellectual circles.[1597]

(vii) In a lengthy addition to the annotation on 1 Peter 5:13 (*in Babylone collecta*) Erasmus' argument that Peter wrote his Epistle in Babylon before he went to Rome gains perspective from its concluding lines: 'If the Roman seat derives its primacy from place, [then one must consider] that the Petrine chair was first at Antioch, and … that the papal chair has sometimes been moved from the city [of Rome], for example by John XXIII … I would not burden the reader with this sort of nonsense if I were not driven to it by the audacity of slanderers.'

(viii) The *1535* annotations reflect the elderly humanist's unabated engagement with the problems of the authenticity of historical writings. Though he had long ago discovered that Theophylact was the true author of the commentary attributed to Athanasius, he returned in *1535* to the question of authorial ascription to describe with obvious relish the effect of human culpability in the transmission of texts, and repeats the story told by 'those who had seen the codex in the pontifical library' that Porsena, the translator, affixed the name of Athanasius to the book he offered to Pope Sixtus IV deliberately to deceive him![1598] Of greater consequence was his discov-

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1597 Cf ASD VI-5 116:171–2. In the early sixteenth century enthusiasm ran high over archeological discoveries in Rome. The discovery of the Laocoon group (now in the Vatican Museum) was especially celebrated: Sadoleto, whom we have met as a later correspondent of Erasmus (cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 346 with n1492), wrote a poem to mark the occasion; cf CEBR III 183. Sadoleto's poem, as well as an interesting excursus on the significance of this discovery, may be found in *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos liber secundus* ed with commentary by R.G. Austin (Oxford 1973) appendix A 293–4 (Sadoleto's poem) and 94–9 (the excursus), where it is said of Sadoleto's poem that 'it well communicates the emotion stirred in the humanist world by the tremendous event' (97).

1598 Cf the annotation on 1 Cor 12:27 (*membra de membro*).

ery of Rufinus as the translator of Origen's commentary on Romans and as the author of a commentary on the Creed. Before the fifth edition, Erasmus had attributed the former to Jerome, the latter to Cyprian. Indeed, as late as the spring of 1533 when he had published the *Explanatio symboli*, he had consistently acknowledged Cyprian as the author of the commentary on the Creed.[1599] In both cases Erasmus recounts, in a model of exploratory engagement, the path by which he came to recognize the true author.[1600]

(ix) Finally, we must note two major omissions, both from annotations written first for the 1516 edition, which had been lavish eulogies. In *1535* the annotation on Luke 1:4 (*eruditus es veritatem*) was reduced to a mere six lines, originally a page and a half in which Budé had received fulsome praise. But after the publication of the *Ciceronianus* in 1528, relations between Erasmus and Budé had become strained, and Erasmus withdrew the eulogy.[1601] From the annotation on 1 Thessalonians 2:7 (*sed facti sumus parvuli*) a large chunk was cut away that had in previous editions eulogized the humanists of various nationalities, leaving mainly the 'Maecenases' of England – Archbishop Warham and William Blount. This surgery removed from well-deserved recognition some dear friends of Erasmus, such as Guillaume Cop and the Amerbach brothers, but it also eliminated the name of Ulrich von Hutten, who, before he died in 1523, had become Erasmus' enemy.[1602]

### 3/ SOURCES AND AUTHORITIES

In the fifth edition Erasmus makes no reference to any new manuscripts or editions used to support or verify his reading of the biblical text. In fact, it is probable that he made little effort to procure new manuscripts or editions as he had so strenuously done in preparing the previous editions of the New Testament. The fifth edition does not, therefore, add to that citation of

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1599 Cf the dedicatory letter to Thomas Boleyn, Allen Ep 2772:1–5 (CWE 70 235); also *Ratio* n1079 and 'New Testament Scholarship' n1513.

1600 Cf the annotations on Rom 3:5 ('is God unfair who inflicts wrath') CWE 56 94–6 with nn11 and 14 (Rufinus translator), and 1 Cor 15:22 (*in Christo omnes vivificabuntur*).

1601 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 323 with nn1369, 1370.

1602 In the eulogy of *1516* Hutten is described as 'the darling of the Muses,' 'New Testament Scholarship' 76. Hutten became the controversial figure around which the quarrel with Eppendorf was focused; cf ibidem 353 with n1526 above. For the relations between Erasmus and Hutten see further CEBR II 216–20 and James Tracy's introduction to *Spongia* in CWE 78 2–29.

manuscripts that had by *1527* become virtually a litany introducing many annotations. And yet in the *1535* additions Erasmus does not entirely neglect the citation of manuscripts. Sometimes, though infrequently, he refers in a general way to the 'Greek' and 'Latin codices.'[1603] In the annotation on Acts 2:23 (*praescientia Dei traditum*) he speaks (but without explication) of the 'Greek codices we see today.' He cites a very few times codices that served him well in previous editions, such as that from the cathedral library in Constance. [1604] Even the Aldine Bible, of which he had acquired his own copy some years before, is cited only two or three times in the *1535* additions. Once he reports a reading he had heard from others.[1605] He generally refused to accept the readings of Codex Vaticanus, urged on him by Sepúlveda.[1606] He spoke of it fretfully: 'Once again they cast in my teeth that magnificent codex from the pontifical library.'[1607] He insisted that it had been corrected according to the Vulgate, and he distinguished it from the exemplar used for the Spanish Complutensian Bible, precisely as he had done in the letter of July 1534 to Sepúlveda.[1608] In fact, when in *1535* the reading of the text was in question, Erasmus resorted primarily to the evidence provided by the Fathers in their citation and commentary on Scripture.

As in previous editions, the Fathers not only provided evidence of the correct readings and sentence construction of the biblical text but also served as a guide to interpretation, a source of information, a point of reference in the exposition of the semantic value of a word, and a standard for the translation of Greek into Latin. For the fifth edition Erasmus had very few additional patristic resources on which to rely, but two new texts are notable. Most important by far was the publication in Verona of Chrysostom's *Homilies* on

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1603 Cf the annotation on Rom 14:2 ('but he who is weak'): '… both the reading and the interpretation of the Greek codices agree in opposing this.' It is possible that here Erasmus has simply deduced the reading of the codices from their citation in the text of commentators interpreting the expression.

1604 Cf the annotations on Mark 5:35 (*ad archisynagogum*) and John 7:39 (*nondum erat spiritus datus*). In at least two cases Erasmus' comments reveal a precise knowledge of the reading in the codex from Constance; cf the annotations on Matt 24:23 (*ecce hic Christus*) and 25:27 (*committere pecuniam meam*).

1605 Cf the annotation on Rom 4:3 ('Abraham believed').

1606 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 362 with n1572.

1607 Cf the annotation on Luke 23:46 (*in manus tuas commendo*).

1608 Cf the annotations on Mark 1:2 (*in Esaia propheta*) and Luke 10:1 (*et alios septuaginta duos*); the latter is included in 'Passages Manifestly Corrupt' (#15) in 'Errors in the Vulgate' 907 where the issue is important for the text of Luke 10:1. Cf also Allen Ep 2951:49–52 (July 1534).

the Pauline Epistles.[1609] Erasmus speaks of this publication several times in the annotations, noting at one point that for the fifth edition he had consulted 'other codices of Chrysostom,' and at another describing these codices as 'more trustworthy.'[1610] In spite of the fact that he had previously acquired manuscripts of Chrysostom's *Homilies* on Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians, the vast number of references to Chrysostom in the *1535* additions in the annotations on Romans and 1 Corinthians – well over one hundred – attest the consistent use made of the Verona Chrysostom. Similarly, he was now able to include, in more than forty new references, the riches from Chrysostom's *Homilies* on the Epistles from Galatians to 2 Thessalonians; references to these *Homilies* had previously been virtually absent from his annotations on these Epistles (except for the *Homilies* on Philippians),[1611] due evidently to the unavailability of even a Latin translation. The enrichment of the annotations on the Pauline Epistles that derived from the references to Chrysostom made newly available by the Verona edition, is one of the distinctive features of the fifth edition.

Erasmus had also available for the fifth edition a Greek fragment of Origen's commentary on Matthew. It had been supplied to him from the library of Ladenburg in Germany some time before 23 May 1527, when he was already engaged in translating it.[1612] He wrote the dedicatory letter to Nikolaus von Diesbach on 6 July of that year, a letter notable for its bold declaration of historical perspective: ancient writers must be judged according to the standards of their own time, not those of the present time.[1613] This was not to save Erasmus from criticism: more than two years later, Cuthbert Tunstall wrote to him to say that 'there are some things in the fragment … that offend scholars,' and he tried to persuade Erasmus to 'make clear that [his] opinion agreed with that of the church.'[1614] Erasmus seems not to have

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1609 For this publication see 'New Testament Scholarship' 350 with n1509.

1610 Cf the annotations on 1 Cor 1:2 (*ipsorum*) and 1 Cor 7:3 (*uxori vir debitum reddat*). Both are identified as the Verona Chrysostom in ASD VI-8 40:16–17 and 124:431–2n. Cf also the annotation on Rom 14:9 ('he died and rose again') CWE 56 376–7 with n17.

1611 Erasmus himself had published the Greek text with a translation of two of the *Homilies* on Philippians in 1526; cf Ep 1734 and 'New Testament Scholarship' 288 and 291.

1612 Cf Epp 1844:101–3 and 1827:3–5 (23 May 1527). Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 328 with n1404.

1613 Cf Ep 1844:19–39.

1614 Cf Ep 2226:39–55.

been deterred by Tunstall's comment;[1615] it is evident, however, that though he appeals specifically to the fragment in the annotation on Matthew 15:5 (*munus quodcumque est*), he did not draw upon it extensively.[1616] I count fewer than eight references to Origen in all the *1535* additions to the annotations on Matthew.[1617]

It is, above all, the standard patristic texts, already well used in previous editions, to which Erasmus turned once again in preparing the edition of 1535. The annotations on Romans receive by far the largest number of new citations from the Fathers, six of whom dominate, with just short of two hundred references altogether. Of these references at least one-third are drawn from Chrysostom. Theophylact, Origen, and Ambrosiaster each provides between twenty-five and thirty references, Augustine about twenty, Jerome about ten. In 1 Corinthians Chrysostom is overwhelmingly the source of new patristic references, likewise, though less dramatically so, in the annotations on the Epistles from 2 Corinthians to 2 Thessalonians. In spite of the abundant use of Chrysostom, Erasmus was persistently doubtful that his Chrysostom was genuine. He concludes the annotation on 2 Corinthians 4:4 (*Deus huius seculi*) with an outspoken admission: 'I should add that the commentaries on this Epistle ascribed to Chrysostom are not his but are the work of some ape!' Theophylact, whom Erasmus now dates 'perhaps after the union of the Greek with the Roman church,'[1618] is well represented throughout the new additions to the annotations on the Gospels and Pauline Epistles, and Augustine likewise for the entire biblical canon. Indeed, Augustine is cited with apparent ease from at least thirty different named works, in addition to numerous citations from the letters, as well as many unspecified references from 'somewhere.' In the annotation on 2 Corinthians 7:10 (*stabilem*)

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1615 Cf Erasmus' response in Ep 2263:71–103. It is possible that Erasmus' edition of the work of Alger on the Eucharist (*De veritate corporis et sanguinis Dominici in eucharistia*) was intended to confirm Erasmus' orthodoxy on Eucharistic doctrine; cf Ep 2284 and 'New Testament Scholarship' 327 with n1392.

1616 Erasmus refers again to the fragment in the annotation on 1 Pet 1:12 (*in quem desiderant*).

1617 Nevertheless, Erasmus' interest in the fragment remained alive. Shortly before he died, he wrote a short preface for it, as it was to be included in an edition of Origen, which, however, was published posthumously; cf Allen Ep 3131.

1618 Thus a fifteenth-century author; cf the annotation on John 7:1 (*in Galilaeam, non enim volebat in Iudaeum*) ASD VI-6 96:543–4. In fact, Theophylact died c 1108; cf CWE 56 15 n25 and 'Prefaces and Letters' 780 with n3.

Erasmus identifies one of his manuscripts of *De civitate Dei* as 'the extremely old Lombardic one,' which, if it is to be identified with that referred to in Ep 1758:9–10, 'written in Lombardic script,' 'would indeed be an early textual authority.'[1619] Jerome appears widely but infrequently in the fresh additions.

In the 1535 edition Erasmus' range of patristic and medieval sources beyond the major standard authors is characteristically broad – a variety of writers cited several times, some of them not more than once or twice: Tertullian, Hilary, Pelagius, Paulinus, Possidius, Irenaeus, Basil of Caesarea, Bede, the *Gloss*, Thomas Aquinas, Peter Comestor. Erasmus continued to rely, though sparingly, on the *Catena aurea*, from which he cited several patristic and medieval authors. Perhaps most striking is a single allusion to Ignatius of Antioch and his 'Letter to the Philadelphians.' Erasmus cites from the longer interpolated recension, first published in Latin in 1489.[1620] Ignatius, he thought, had affirmed that the apostles, including Peter and Paul, had wives. Chrysostom disagreed, but whom are we to believe, writes Erasmus – Ignatius, a disciple of Mark the evangelist, or Chrysostom, a bishop centuries removed from the time of the apostles?[1621] In the historical perspective the primitive has the greater authority.

### 4/ THE ANNOTATIONS ON ROMANS AND 1 CORINTHIANS, 1535

It was Erasmus' work primarily on Romans and 1 Corinthians that raised the *Annotations* of *1535* beyond a useful attempt to qualify, to complete, and to perfect what had already been written and at points challenged – in fact, to raise the *Annotations* to a level that may appear to make the last edition the climax of them all. The reworking of the annotations on Romans, though slender in the first two chapters, was thereafter fairly consistent throughout the remaining fourteen chapters, while 1 Corinthians is distinguished particularly by two annotations, together more than four and a half pages in length, on the thirteenth chapter. We undoubtedly have Erasmus' critics to thank for this – in the case of 1 Corinthians primarily the Paris theologians, in the case of Romans primarily the criticism of Frans Titelmans, though in his *1535* annotation on some passages Erasmus seems to have in mind a very long line of critics, from the Paris theologians to López Zúñiga and Edward Lee.

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1619 For the identification see ASD VI-8 400:230–1n; for the citation here, Ep 1758:9n.
1620 *Patrology* I 74
1621 Cf the annotation on Phil 4:3 (*germane compar*) ASD VI-9 322:672–324:680.

*(i) Romans*

While Titelmans' presuppositions that every word in the Vulgate had been chosen by the Holy Spirit, every text constructed by divinity, quite invalidated Erasmus' philological approach to Scripture, Titelmans nevertheless addressed the *Annotations* on philological ground, endeavouring to show philologically that the Vulgate was beyond correction or improvement. Erasmus' response was, accordingly, primarily philological, not theological. However, Erasmus' response in the annotations was lavish, in many cases ranging widely over Scripture and the Fathers, with abundant quotations, tracing with precision the thought of Paul, citing sometimes the distant, sometimes the immediate context of the biblical passage in question, recurrently reflecting the outlines of Pauline theology. As a consequence, while Erasmus adhered closely to his characteristic philological method in the *1535* additions, the linguistic texture of the annotations was frequently enriched in a manner that enables the annotations to assume a cast variously devotional, homiletic, and even theological.

Since Titelmans defended the language of the Vulgate against any change, Erasmus found ample opportunity to examine the semantics of the Greek and Latin words, pointing to the most appropriate Latin equivalent for a particular Greek word. There are at least four entirely new annotations in 1535 devoted to this endeavour:

**Romans 10:11** CWE 56 280–1: *καταισχυνθήσεται* VG *confundetur* 'be confounded' ER *pudefiet* 'be made ashamed'

**Romans 12:1** CWE 56 320–1: *παραστήσατε* VG *exhibeatis* 'present' ER *praebeatis* 'furnish.' Erasmus reflects on the significance of the word for personal commitment to Christ after baptism.

**Romans 13:11** CWE 56 357–8: *ἐγερθῆναι* VG *surgere* 'to rise' ER *expergisci* 'to awaken.' Erasmus notes that in its context the word suggests one waking from the sleep of sin and cites 1 Thessalonians 5:5–7.

**Romans 15:27** CWE 56 417–18 *ἐκοινώνησαν* VG *participes facti sunt* 'have become partakers' ER *communicaverunt* 'have shared.' Erasmus comments on Paul's varied use of the word and its significance for Christians in the scheme of saving-history.

We find the majority of these word studies not, however, in new annotations but in *1535* additions to previous annotations. Erasmus adds to his study of the word *λογίζομαι* in annotations on Romans 4:3 (VG *reputatum est* 'was considered' ER *imputatum est* 'was imputed') and 8:18 (VG *existimo* 'I suppose' ER *reputo* 'I consider'). Significantly, Erasmus rejects in the former annotation the word he insists on in the latter, but in the former he points to

the fundamental principle that context influences meaning and hence determines the appropriate Latin word; into the long central portion of the latter annotation he weaves a fabric of biblical quotations, concluding with an image of self-restraint, a quality in which Paul the Apostle implicitly stands as a model for pastors.[1622] A long addition to the annotation on Romans 13:12 (VG *praecessit* 'has preceded' ER *progressa est* 'has advanced') cites Chrysostom's beautiful image of the dawn as a time for Christians to prepare for the climax of saving-history: 'For when we see the night hastening towards the dawn and hear the swallow singing, we each rouse our neighbour, though it is still night. Then when the night has passed, we each make haste to address one another, saying, "It is day," and we do all the things that are of the day, clothing ourselves, casting aside our dreams, shaking off sleep, so that the day will find us prepared.' Thus the close and somewhat extravagant attention in *1535* to the language of the Epistle to the Romans, while philological in aim and method, is not without its appeal to Christian experience.

In response primarily to Titelmans, Erasmus laboured at numerous points to establish his construction of the biblical text. I shall note here only three such discussions, all of them effecting major revisions of previous but short annotations. In Romans 5:1 the manuscript evidence constructs the text with either an indicative or subjunctive of the main verb: either 'We have peace with God' or 'Let us have peace with God.' Erasmus, following the Byzantine tradition, read the indicative. The reading, as Erasmus pointed out, has implications for both theology and the practice of Christian living. The indicative focuses attention on the gift of justification realized – peace not as a result of our merits but of the freely offered kindness of God. The implicit soteriology is reinforced by the interpretation of the Fathers: Ambrosiaster, Origen, Chrysostom, and Theophylact in a recitation of patristic evidence characteristic of the efforts in *1535* to construct the biblical text.[1623]

We should not mistake the long annotation on Romans 5:12 ('in whom [or, in which] all have sinned')[1624] for a theological discussion on original sin, however much the ample citations from the Fathers and the lengthy review of contextual Scripture inevitably point to the subject of sin. The annotation is rather an attempt to determine the proper construction of a sentence, and

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1622 A *1535* addition to the annotation on 2 Cor 10:1 (*absens autem confido in vobis*) offers a further analysis of the word, noting even more obviously than here, in the annotation on Rom 8:18, Paul's exemplary restraint in imposing punishment.

1623 Cf the annotation on Rom 5:1 ('let us have peace in regard to God').

1624 CWE 56 139–67 (including the notes)

in particular the significance of the expression *ἐφ' ᾧ* from which the problem of construction arises; it is, secondarily, a defence of Erasmus' claims that the grammar is ambiguous, that the construction is therefore not a foregone conclusion, and that he is not the only one in the history of exegesis to acknowledge that the 'sin' of which the Apostle speaks here can be the sin of imitation. The Paris theologians, objecting to his paraphrase, and Frans Titelmans, criticizing his translation, had challenged Erasmus on his interpretation of the verse, but that Titelmans is primarily in view is suggested by the fact that the argument in the annotation is essentially the same as that addressed to Titelmans in the *Responsio ad Collationes*, but much more effectively organized here.[1625]

Though Erasmus occasionally introduces tangential ideas in this annotation, as elsewhere, the outline of the argument is fairly clear. He begins by setting out the point in dispute – in classical rhetorical terms, the *partitio*: there are two main interpretations traditionally given to the prepositional phrase – either 'in whom' (or 'in which') or 'in this that,' the former implying original sin, the latter the sin of imitation. Then, in a preliminary step (rhetorically, the *praemunitio*), Erasmus points to the difficulties in understanding the expression as a reference to original sin: the prepositional phrase *ἐφ' ᾧ* cannot mean literally 'in whom' but must be accepted as a figure of speech, while the Vulgate's *pertransit* 'passed through' (which connotes a path of descent appropriate to the idea of original sin) is not an appropriate translation for the Greek *διῆλθεν*, for which Erasmus preferred *pervasit* 'broke through.' Thus the language in itself does not necessitate the interpretation of original sin.[1626] Erasmus is now ready in a rhetorical *confirmatio* to determine the interpretation of the verse. He reviews at length the interpretations of Pelagius, Origen, Ambrosiaster, Chrysostom, and Theophylact.[1627] The long citations are probed and evaluated in such a manner that these authors acquire an effective presence in the argument. Ambrosiaster proves to be somewhat problematic, but his thought is grasped by a major review of the scriptural context of the verse, beginning with Romans 1 and continuing as far as 5:18, a review that in passing brings before the reader a summary of Pauline theology, directed towards ascertaining the probable sense of 5:12. After this extensive

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1625 For the response to Titelmans see *Responsio ad Collationes* CWE 73 186–200; for the response to the Paris theologians see *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* CWE 82 208–10 with n752.

1626 Cf CWE 56 141.

1627 Ibidem 141–8

survey of patristic and biblical literature, Erasmus turns to answer in a kind of rhetorical *refutatio* or *reprehensio* objections that may remain: to construct the verse to refer to the sin of imitation gives a handle to the Pelagians, opposes the exegetical tradition of the church, disagrees with Augustine, and endangers the church. Thus the annotation is a well-built argument in defence of philological integrity, enriched by the presence of the Fathers and supported by the elucidation of a broad Pauline vision effected by a philologically sound exploration of the biblical context of the expression in question.

The annotation on Romans 9:5 offers both similarities to and points of contrast with that on Romans 5:12. First, both are *cruces interpretationis* with profound significance for Christian self-understanding, which Erasmus addresses, however, from a philological point of view. While the issue in Romans 9:5 derived not from the interpretation of a grammatical expression but from a question about punctuation, here too one had to acknowledge ambiguity. Second, the annotation on 5:12 was by *1527* only a paragraph in length but in *1535* was extended to cover six and a half pages, therefore virtually new in the fifth edition. The annotation on Romans 9:5 had been the subject of criticism from the beginning[1628] and before *1535* was already a full page in length; while it would double in size in *1535*, in this final version it was essentially a revision of previous work. The *1535* version of both annotations is marked by a tightly structured argument, although the annotation on 9:5 does not develop within the traditional classical rhetorical structures in the same way as the annotation on 5:12.

In the annotation on Romans 9:5 the philological issue comes very sharply and emphatically into prominence. Indeed, the annotation assumes its basic structure from the delineation of the various ways in which the biblical text can be punctuated at this point. Among these, it is the third possibility proposed that Erasmus addresses at greatest length: 'God who is above all be blessed forever.'[1629] In doing so, he sets the text in the perspective of the Pauline vision of saving-history and cites the Fathers, Ambrosiaster, Origen, and Chrysostom, whose text already quoted in *1527* imparts to the annotation the immediate psychological drama of Pauline emotion. As Erasmus approaches the conclusion, he considers the criticism that the ambiguity of punctuation here threatens the doctrine of the Trinity, which he counters with an eloquent review of the 'many ways the wonderful providence of

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1628 For the criticism see the annotation on the verse ('who is above all things God') CWE 56 242 n2.

1629 RSV, but the reading of this passage is still disputed; cf NRSV.

God … took care for the salvation of the human race'[1630] and then points to the significance of philology in the discussion of this passage: 'Now if the church teaches that this passage must be interpreted only in relation to the divinity of the Son, then the church must be obeyed … but if [the church] says that this passage cannot, according to the Greek, be explained in any other way, it affirms what the facts immediately disprove.'[1631] Like the annotation on Romans 5:12, the annotation on Romans 9:5 has acquired a new richness of imagery in the process of the philological investigation.

*(ii) 1 Corinthians*

The additions of *1535* to the annotations on 1 Corinthians are generally rather meagre. There are, to be sure, a few notable and invariably interesting exceptions: the study of the Greek word *περίψημα* 'offscouring' (RSV), 'dregs' (NRSV) in 1 Corinthians 4:13; the attempt to determine the meaning of *ἀγάμοις* 'unmarried' in 7:8; the discovery, reported in 1 Corinthians 15, of Rufinus as the author of the commentary on the Creed,[1632] while the many scattered allusions to Chrysostom, taken as a whole, are sufficient in themselves to give the annotations on 1 Corinthians a certain distinction. But just as in the *1519 Annotations* 1 Corinthians was distinguished by the long note on marriage, so two annotations on the thirteenth chapter – one on 13:2 (*charitatem non habeam*) and one on 13:13 (*maior autem horum*) – give the book a special place in the edition of 1535. Together they occupy somewhat more than four and a half pages; the former is a completely new annotation, the latter a large extension of a previous annotation of only several lines. The Paris theologians, in particular, had raised the question of the relation of faith and charity, and would appear therefore to have been the primary stimulus for the discussion in these annotations.[1633]

The annotation on 1 Corinthians 13:2 is essentially a defence of Erasmus' use of the expression *sola fides* 'faith alone.' Erasmus is exorbitant in his use of citations and exempla in making his chief point – that there is no possibility of true faith apart from charity, that is, without good works. Someone who attempted to defend the doctrine of justification by 'faith alone' might suppose support could be found in 13:2, 'If I have faith … but have not charity,'

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1630 Cf CWE 56 245.
1631 CWE 56 246
1632 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 371 with n1599.
1633 Cf *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* CWE 82 69–81 (Topic 7) and 'New Testament Scholarship' 341 with n1463.

which seems to separate faith from charity. Erasmus establishes his position among the orthodox by demonstrating philologically that the verse permits no such conclusion. This verse is an unreal supposition: '*If* it should be that I have faith, but have not charity.' The hypothesis implies that such is not the case, and the context implies even more emphatically that such cannot be the case. Erasmus now proceeds to definition. The Apostle is speaking here of 'true faith,' which Erasmus defines: 'True faith is a gift of the Spirit.' 'Since true faith embraces many things – a firm assent to all that is handed down to us as necessary to salvation, and a confident trust in the mercy of God and his promises to be fulfilled either in this life or the next[1634] – how would such a gift come to us apart from charity.'[1635] Erasmus finally undertakes a very long exposition of the meaning of *sola* 'alone,' reviewing classical literature, biblical literature, Thomas Aquinas, and colloquial speech to show that when *sola* is used in an expression such as *sola fides*, it means not 'apart from everything else' but 'pre-eminently.' He concludes the annotation with a summary affirmation: 'Accordingly, whoever says we are justified by faith alone does not forthwith exclude charity or charitable works, but human philosophy, or the ceremonies and works of the Law, or the life lived before baptism, or something similar gathered from the context … In all his Epistles Paul nowhere separates charity from purifying faith.'

In the last annotation on the chapter Erasmus continues the discussion of faith and charity begun in the annotation on 13:2. He acknowledges at once the difficulties in understanding the Pauline mind, as indeed he had acknowledged many years before in writing his *Paraphrase on Romans*.[1636] And first he examines the significance of the word 'now': 'Now abides faith, hope, and charity.' While these all belong 'now' to this world, only charity will have a place in the next, where, therefore, it will not have faith as its inseparable companion. Second, how can charity be called 'greater than faith'? Erasmus equivocates. In certain respects charity can be given first place among the gifts of the Spirit. But Erasmus ultimately offers precedence to faith: 'No gift is pleasing to God without charity, and no gift can be received without faith, indeed cannot even be given without faith. For faith is, as it were, the hands of the soul by which we receive and embrace the abundant gifts of the Spirit,

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1634 The definition reflects essentially the formulaic *fides quam* 'content of belief' and the *fides qua* 'the means by which one believes.'

1635 ASD VI-8 253:710–254:714. With this definition compare that in the *1527* annotation on Rom 1:17 ('from faith unto faith').

1636 Cf the Argument to the *Paraphrase*, CWE 42 12–14.

without which not even the works of charity are pleasing to God. Moreover, faith is by nature prior to charity, since through faith we come to know God, and nothing can be loved unless it is known.' Erasmus concludes the annotation: 'This [that is, faith] is the root and source of all spiritual gifts, even of charity itself. It is from charity that we offer for the benefit of our neighbour any good that has come to us, whether spiritual or moral, whether by nature or chance. I have spoken thus not as a firm declaration; I have wished rather to offer an occasion to the learned to reflect upon the better.' In these two annotations on 1 Corinthians 13 Erasmus has offered virtually the last major discourse to be found in his New Testament scholarship on the challenging problem of the relation between faith and charity.[1637]

## XII ERASMIAN RETROSPECTIVES

The dramatic events that brought the Reformation to Basel in 1528 and 1529 provided for Erasmus an occasion to review his life and work in a survey in which he gave the New Testament scholarship a central role.[1638] I should like now to cast a glance more widely over his work to catch Erasmus at various points in his career in reflection on his New Testament scholarship. How does he present to his readers the work he accomplished over the years – his conception of his scholarship, his method and approach, the goals of his New Testament work, the purpose and character of his *Paraphrases*? In spite of numerous restatements, he presents himself throughout his life with noteworthy consistency. Variations, where they occur, arise largely in response to the differing contexts in which he speaks.

In Erasmus' view, the association with Froben and friendly scholars in Basel in 1516 brought a fundamental change in the conceptualization of his work on the New Testament. Writing to Budé in June 1516, just three months after the New Testament had been published, he said that originally he had 'decided to treat the whole thing lightly … merely to point a finger,

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1637 For the citation see ASD VI-8 264:934–9 and 266:973–7. Cf the similar discussion of the relation between faith and charity in *Ecclesiastes* 4 CWE 68 1041–6, especially 1045–6, where Erasmus observes that 'faith begets charity, charity in turn nourishes faith with good works … these are the two sources of all the virtues and good works …' The *Ecclesiastes* was published a short six months after the *1535* New Testament.

1638 Cf the events described above, 'New Testament Scholarship' 260–1 with n1083.

as it were, at some passages in passing.'[1639] It was not until the work was 'due to be published' that he was induced to add his own translation, which in turn entailed 'rather fuller annotations.'[1640] Four years later, writing his response to Lee (April / May 1520), he broadened the observation to make, however, the central point that he had not intended at first to set formally his own Latin translation in the text. He speaks as though his first plan was to include a Greek text and place the Vulgate beside it.[1641] Nearly three years later, writing in January 1523 to Johann von Botzheim, he returned to the central claim made in his letter to Budé, with interesting enhancements. After describing his intense work in classical literature as 'preliminary exercises,' he says: 'I addressed myself to the New Testament in which I had made up my mind to be so sparing of words that my plan was to write notes in two or three words on every passage … When Froben was already set to print my work, scholarly friends … moved me actually to alter the Vulgate text and to be rather fuller in my annotations.'[1642] He was both pleased and chastened by the result: while his work led many 'to the study either of Greek or of a purer form of theology,' it had earned him 'much ill will.'[1643]

In some measure Erasmus was able to serve as his own critic. He recognized that his work was often carelessly done, due to his ingrained habit of haste. Only a few months after writing to Botzheim, he wrote to Pope Adrian VI to explain his relation to Luther and to offer a 'plan' for healing the discord in the church. He acknowledged that criticism of his work from both sides had some grounds for justification, because 'almost all' of his work had been done 'in a hurry,' which was, he admitted, 'a congenital fault' of his.[1644] To Alberto Pio he again acknowledged in 1529 that the 'allegation of certain parties' had some justification, due to his haste in writing, which he described in a memorable image: 'Whatever I publish is better termed a miscarriage than a birth. This vice is deeply ingrained in me. I cannot endure the tedium of revision … or diligence in polishing up what is misshapen. And I myself

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1639 Ep 421:48–50
1640 Ep 421:51–4
1641 Cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* (Note 1) CWE 72 76.
1642 Ep 1341A:478–85. We may recall here Erasmus' comments to Cousturier in 1525: he undertook the New Testament project at first because Greek literature was flourishing and he wished to set the hearts of Christians aflame with a godly piety; at first he intended to use the Vulgate and not his own translation for his text; cf 276 with n1163.
1643 Ep 1341A:486–8
1644 Cf Ep 1352:106–7.

have very often paid the penalty … as I lick my work into shape a second time more wearisomely than if I had exercised due care at first.'[1645] Preparing his fifth edition of the New Testament, he lamented to Sepúlveda, 'If only I had taken more care at the beginning.'[1646]

If Erasmus' haste had opened him to criticism on both philological and theological grounds, it was particularly in relation to the reform movement that he expressed regrets for the published form of some of his scholarship. The Diet of Worms was still not officially dismissed when Erasmus wrote to Justus Jonas and complained that German translations from his *Annotations* on the New Testament had been made to 'approximate some of Luther's opinions.' He noted, '… (to be quite frank) had I known that a generation such as this would appear, I should either not have written at all some things that I have written or should have written them differently.'[1647] To Adrian he excused himself for unguarded comments by observing in 1523 that much of what he had written had been published 'before anyone dreamed of the rise of this generation.'[1648] He made the same excuse to Alberto Pio in 1525, which became an expression of regret in 1529 when he wrote his reply to Pio: 'I have done and written things that I would not have been about to do or write had I been able to divine that this epoch was going to dawn …'[1649] In the last days of December 1533, he wrote to the Mexía brothers, Pero and Cristóbal, repeating the same sentiment: had he foreseen the arrival of this age, he would not have written what he wrote or would have written otherwise.[1650]

Erasmus' apologies and regrets were, however, essentially tangential to his abiding conviction of the value of his New Testament scholarship. Seldom did he express the goals of the enterprise more clearly than in the letter dedicating to Pope Leo X the 1516 edition of the New Testament and in the preface to the *Annotations*. In the latter he stated his goal in notably broad terms: the restoration of the Christian religion, which will be effected if Christians absorb from the writings of the evangelists and apostles the 'Christian philosophy,' that is, the principles laid down by Christ. It is in the Scriptures that the

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1645 *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* CWE 84 19
1646 Allen Ep 2951:13–14 (3 July 1534)
1647 Ep 1202:239–40, 264–7 (10 May 1521). Cf Ep 1202 n46, where it is observed that there appeared 'no less than thirty anonymous editions, all dated 1521, of individually selected texts from Erasmus' *Annotations* to the New Testament of 1518/19.'
1648 Ep 1352:105–6
1649 *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* CWE 84 20; see Ep 1634:84–6 for the 1525 'excuse.'
1650 Cf Allen Ep 2892:50–2. On the Mexía brothers see CEBR II 439–40.

voice of Christ speaks with special efficacy. To make this voice accessible, the language of the New Testament had to be made not more polished but more correct and more lucid, and biblical problems had to be solved. This is to recognize his work as merely foundational: rubble for a foundation on which others can build the temple of God, the work of a philologist preparing the way for the biblical exegete and the theologian.[1651]

We hear echoes of these goals in Erasmus' later writings. In 1520 Erasmus wrote to Juan Luis Vives: 'I have tried to open the fountainhead of true piety and religion. I have done my best to restore theology …'[1652] In 1529 he asked Alberto Pio: '… what use are the Scriptures if we are not to be allowed through them to recall an almost wholly degenerate piety back to its original model.'[1653] To Edward Lee he insisted in 1520 that 'at the urging of learned men' he had undertaken 'to free the New Testament from solecisms as far as possible, so that it could be read with less offence to those who like pure speech.'[1654] In the *Contra morosos* (1519) he attempted to clarify more specifically the nature of his work as a biblical scholar: 'I certainly did not undertake this task [of revising the New Testament] to provide a standard from which it would not be possible to diverge, but to make a substantial contribution both to the correction and to the understanding of the sacred books' (paragraph 58). In 1527 he recalled the foundational nature of his life's work: he had supported the humanities as the handmaid of the higher disciplines, to enable the reading of the Sacred Scriptures and of the Fathers.[1655] In later years there is perhaps a somewhat broader formulation of the role of the Fathers in his New Testament scholarship. In 1527 he told Alonso Manrique de Lara, archbishop of Seville and inquisitor-general of Spain, that he 'had issued his New Testament so that the Latins might know what readings were available to Origen, Irenaeus, Basil, Chrysostom, Athanasius, and

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1651 For 'restoration of religion' see the 1516 letter to Leo, Ep 384:44–51 ('Prefaces and Letters' 769); for 'not polished but lucid' see the December 1515 'Letter to the Reader,' Ep 373:203–4 ('Prefaces and Letters' 790); and for the 'rubble / temple' image, Ep 373:159–69 ('Prefaces and Letters' 788–9). Cf also the letter written to Ludwig Baer in 1529, just before Erasmus left Basel for Freiburg, in which he says that he had produced an intelligible version of the New Testament in purer language 'to induce the lazy to interest themselves in the philosophy of Christ'; quoted in 'New Testament Scholarship' 261 with n1083.

1652 Ep 1104:4–5

1653 *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* CWE 84 35

1654 *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* (Note 9) CWE 72 100–1

1655 Cf Ep 1805:21–30.

Cyril, whose commentaries we possess.'[1656] In his reply to Alberto Pio (1529) he noted that 'all the best people' approved his New Testament translation, 'for they realized that this effort was required for understanding the Greek commentaries, since the text of all of them disagrees with the text of ours that is in general circulation.'[1657]

Both friends and foes elicited from Erasmus reflections on the purpose and the literary character of his *Paraphrases*. Richard Pace was clearly pleased with Erasmus' early work in paraphrasing. In response to Pace's enthusiastic evaluation, Erasmus expressed a reserve that nevertheless indicated his fundamental purpose: he would be sorry if his *Paraphrases* encouraged people to neglect the commentators, especially the Fathers; he hoped rather that his work would encourage his readers to turn to the commentators, and not only to the commentators but to the Apostle himself. Indeed, to know that his readers were led through his *Paraphrases* to find Paul more attractive would be a fully adequate reward for his work. He explained further that he did not aim for elaborate language but employed whatever came to mind.[1658]

Erasmus, believing (mistakenly) that the Spaniard Francisco de Vitoria held some influence with the Paris theologians, wrote to him in late 1527 about the calumnies Béda cast against him, accusations Béda had derived from his reading of the *Paraphrases*. In his letter to Vitoria Erasmus reaffirms his central purpose: 'I strove to attract scholars of belles lettres, as with a lure, to the love of sacred letters.'[1659] He attempted 'to give clear expression to what Christ and the apostles taught in their times,' 'to deploy a mode of expression proper to each speaker.' In contrast to the scholastic style, such expression may be called rhetorical, though his general intent was to write not in a rhetorical but in a refined style.[1660] Earlier in the same year he had responded to Béda's critique by accenting the humble nature of his work as a paraphrast. He had done nothing more than what an elementary instructor (*literator*) does when he reads Virgil with his students: he explains the text by explicating the argument in 'loose speech and clearer words.'[1661]

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1656 Ep 1877:319–21
1657 *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* CWE 84 19
1658 Cf Ep 962:8–21. At the time of this letter ('first half of May' 1519), Erasmus had published *Paraphrases* on only Romans and 1 and 2 Corinthians. We note that here, as elsewhere, Erasmus professes to write his *Paraphrases* more or less spontaneously.
1659 Ep 1909:139–41
1660 Ep 1909:137–47
1661 Cf *Supputatio* ASD IX-5 224:280–2.

In the face of Alberto Pio's criticisms, Erasmus again in 1529 was impelled to justify the language: '... there are in my *Paraphrases* none of the trappings of declamations that you ascribe to them … Nowhere do I assign to Christ speech that is studied and highly wrought, since there is no work of mine that I completed more extempore …'[1662] Responding in 1532 to the Paris theologians, he characterized the language of the *Paraphrases* as 'purer so as to make the majesty and proper diction of Scripture apparent,' and notes that the *Paraphrases* were directed to the *fastidiosi* 'the disdainful,' those squeamish in their literary tastes, to offer to them a summary for 'a basic knowledge of the philosophy of Christ.'[1663]

Two letters, both written in August 1535, offer retrospective views by Erasmus of his life and work, and a recollection of them will provide a fitting conclusion to our study. The first is an *apologia* written to Johann Koler, in which Erasmus defended himself from the attack of Pietro Corsi, who had accused him of Italophobia – of hating the Italians.[1664] Erasmus protested. As a young man he had often yearned to escape the barbarism of his native Holland and go to Italy, where there was civility, *humanitas*, and polite letters. When he finally arrived in Italy at forty years of age, he made friends of the great humanists there.[1665] For those who criticize his style of writing, he admits that he writes too extemporaneously and too much, but he credits his literary effusion to his desire to overthrow the crass barbarism of the Germany of his youth and to arouse his countrymen to pursue studies.[1666] Yet, for all its civility, Italy must be purged of the paganism that attends it, which Corsi's writing itself exemplifies, and must become glorious in celebrating the triumphs of Christ.[1667]

The second letter takes us to the correspondence with Damião de Gois. A young Portuguese, Damião de Gois, much liked by Erasmus, in 1534 had fallen under the spell of the Ciceronians in Italy and urged Erasmus to polish his writings. Erasmus refused. He replied that though he recognized the advice as friendly, it was in fact in vain. 'It is my nature to write extemporaneously,'

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1662 *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* CWE 84 80
1663 Cf *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* CWE 82 156–7, 165.
1664 For Pietro Corsi and his complaint see 'New Testament Scholarship' 322 with n1359.
1665 Cf Allen Ep 3032:185–209.
1666 Allen Ep 3032:456–67
1667 Allen Ep 3032:282–300. Some of the imagery in this letter may recall the images of the glory of Christian Rome in the dedicatory letter to the *Paraphrase on Romans* published in 1517; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 92 with n373.

he said. 'When it comes to revision, I am remarkably lazy!'[1668] In any case, his works had been written not for Italians but for dull Dutchmen (Batavians) and untutored Germans. He continued: 'For some subjects refined polish of speech is not suitable. The perfume bottles of Cicero are inappropriate to literary compositions designed for instruction and for those that deal with religion. An example of the former kind is the *Adagia*, of the latter my *Paraphrases*, *Annotations*, and many others, to which if you try to apply the polish of Ciceronian expression, they somehow become ineffectual for those who are eager to cultivate true piety, who seek the transcending energy of spirit, not the petty decoration of words. That heavenly philosophy has its own wisdom; it likewise has its own eloquence. The mysteries require their own kind of language.'[1669] In spite of the passing of time, of the many transformations in Europe of the sixteenth century, and of the struggles of Erasmus' own life, we hear in the words of this aged scholar echoes of the sentiments of the youthful humanist appropriating his skills as a philologian for the restoration of true Christianity.

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1668 Allen Ep 3043:35–8 (18 August 1535). On Damião de Gois see CEBR II 115–16.

1669 Cf Allen Ep 3043:40–8. With the analysis given here of the language appropriate to the discussion of theology compare the discussion in the letter to Balthasar Merklin, which served as a preface to Erasmus' edition of Alger's treatise *De veritate corporis et sanguinis Dominici in eucharistia* (1530): 'But it seems to me only fitting that, in explaining the mysteries of faith, we should seek by one means or another to achieve a certain dignity of language and that one's feelings should not be hidden. For in this way not only will the reader understand what he is being taught by his teacher, but come to love what his teacher loves,' Ep 2284: 55–60; and for the extended passage see 36–64. For the edition of Alger's treatise see 'New Testament Scholarship' 327 with n1392 and 373–4 with n1615.

# Major Documents in the Five Editions of the New Testament 1516–35

In this third part of CWE 41 we provide annotated translations of major documents that appeared at least once as prefaces in the five editions of Erasmus' New Testament: the *Paraclesis*, the *Methodus*, the *Apologia*, and the *Ratio*. Three appeared first in *1516* as relatively small pieces prefatory to the text of the New Testament. The *Paraclesis* soon began a life of its own and after *1522* was no longer included among the prefaces. The *Methodus* as such was never repeated after the edition of *1516* but was transformed into the *Ratio*. Already in late 1518 the *Ratio* was published without the New Testament and appeared only once thereafter with it, in the edition of March 1519. Indeed, Erasmus came to regard both the *Paraclesis* and the *Ratio* as 'works of Christian instruction,' and under that title in the 'Catalogue' of his works published in 1524 and again in 1530 separated them from his New Testament scholarship. In fact, of these three – or rather four – prefaces, only the *Apologia* appeared in all five editions of the New Testament. In the introductory essay on the New Testament Scholarship of Erasmus these have all been set in relation to Erasmus' work on the New Testament, but we may speak further of them as major documents, reserving more extended comment on the *Ratio* for the introduction to that work.

Certainly the popularity of two of them, the *Paraclesis* and the *Ratio*, justify their status as major Erasmian publications. The avidity with which they were read during Erasmus' lifetime, demonstrated by the numerous editions required to satisfy demand, signals the importance attached to them at the time. The *Methodus*, though brief and published only once, was foundational for the *Ratio*, and was, in fact, as we have seen,[1] almost wholly incorporated into the later work. Erasmus clearly regarded the *Apologia*, likewise brief, as indispensable to his readers if they were to have some sense of the time and

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1 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 114 with n496.

energy he expended upon the New Testament, and we still find it so. But it is perhaps from their hermeneutical significance especially that these documents have acquired major importance.

The popularity of the *Paraclesis* in the age of Erasmus, and in our own times as well, is easily understood: we are profoundly moved by the passion evident in its invitation to subscribe to the 'philosophy of Christ,' by the richness and range of its imagery, the surprise, even shock of its proposal for vernacular translations with its charming portrait of the farmer, the weaver, the traveller chanting, singing, telling the stories of Scripture as they live out their lives in the workaday world. At its core, however, lies a hermeneutical principle, astonishing in its claim, that Scripture has the power, when the reader absorbs it and is absorbed by it, to transform the person into the image of Christ portrayed in its sacred pages. The recipe for realizing this transformation arrests by its near-absolute terms: learn the Scriptures by heart, live always in them, let even infants be swaddled in them, live by their precepts that challenge every norm of conventional society. In the *Paraclesis* the Scriptures are presented not as a text for scholastic investigation but as spiritual food for the soul's digestion and as a prescription for living a transformed life.

The first sentence of the *Methodus* reflects unmistakably Erasmus' intention that this little work should be seen in close relation with the *Paraclesis*: if we wish to enjoy the transformative experience of which the *Paraclesis* speaks, how do we realize our wish? In fact, however, the subject of interest in the *Methodus* is clearly different from that in the *Paraclesis*, where the invitation seemed extended to all. In the *Methodus* it soon becomes apparent that the subject of interest has become narrowed in particular to the young person looking to become in some sense a theologian. The text speaks of the young man destined for theology, of the young tyro. It is for such a person that the *Methodus* offers a 'method' for becoming an effective interpreter of Scripture. In the method offered, a few points stand out.

The *Methodus* begins by harking back to the *Paraclesis* with the fundamental prerequisite for sound biblical interpretation: to approach Scripture not only with a desire to learn but with a desire to be transformed 'into what you are learning.' Erasmus hastens to add further prerequisites: a knowledge (limited if necessary) of the biblical languages and some knowledge of the liberal arts. Erasmus has clear advice for the young tyro when he comes to the study of Scripture. He should undertake his study of Scripture not under the aegis of the scholastics but under the guidance of the ancient Fathers. Perhaps surprising to us, it is a central concern of Erasmus that we approach the interpretation of Scripture with unblushing bias: the theologian should

have firmly fixed in his mind the central teachings of Christ as a target point against which to measure every interpretation. Erasmus urges the young theologian to learn to 'philosophize' in the investigation of Scripture, although on other occasions in these documents Erasmus is ambiguous about 'philosophizing in Scripture.' Then, too, he offers a warning that he will repeat elsewhere, a warning against the temptation to accommodate the interpretation of Scripture to public moods and mores. We may note finally a point that lies close to the centre of the Erasmian hermeneutical vision, that the interpeter should 'observe the special idiom of theological discourse, for that Divine Spirit has a sort of language of its own.'[2]

The *Apologia* comes last in order of the three prefaces of *1516*. If in the *Paraclesis* the subject of interest was Everyman, and in the *Methodus* the young man eager to be a theologian, the subject of interest in the *Apologia* was the theologically trained critic. While it was in later controversy with his critics that Erasmus would work out in detail some of the more difficult problems of interpretation – the obscurity of Scripture, the role of the Holy Spirit in the translation of Scripture, the relation between word and meaning in Scripture – already in the *1516 Apologia* he would articulate some of the most fundamental principles on which the interpretation of Scripture must be established: that the proper text for interpretation was the text in the orginal language; that translations were both legitimate and helpful, but the authority of Scripture resided not in them but in the original text; that constructive interpretation required attention to every detail, however small, of the language of the text, which was to say that interpretation must begin with the application of the tools of the grammarian; and, finally, that when one sought the help of exegetes, it was to the 'ancient theologians' that one should look, interpeters 'who are commended to us both by their erudition and the saintliness of their lives.'[3]

Erasmus made very few changes to the text of the *Apologia* until the edition of 1527, when, along with numerous minor improvements, a substantial addition was made, clearly in response to critics who had seen in Erasmus' work a threat to the authority of Scripture. To this concern Erasmus responded with an affirmation of faith in Scripture, which retains its power in spite of the vagaries of translators and interpreters: 'If all authority collapses because of a certain number of corrupt passages, the Holy Spirit ought to have

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2 Cf *Methodus* 446 with n104.
3 Cf *Apologia* 459.

attended the copyists as he did the prophets and evangelists. The Holy Spirit is present everywhere, but exerts his force in such a way as to leave some of the work for us to do. That inviolable authority of Scripture stopped with the prophets and the apostles or evangelists. But it is the great glory of Scripture that, although re-expressed so often in so many languages, so often mutilated or corrupted by heretics, contaminated in so many ways by the carelessness of scribes, it nevertheless retains the vigour of eternal truth.'[4]

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4 Cf *Apologia* 467–8.

# THE PARACLESIS OF ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE PIOUS READER

*Erasmi Roterodami paraclesis ad lectorem pium*

introduced, translated, and annotated by

ANN DALZELL

The *Paraclesis* is placed first of the three prefatory essays written for the *Novum instrumentum* of 1516.[1] It was cast in the form of a letter (specifically, a letter of persuasion), a well-established genre with a recognized structure and style. It was addressed to the 'Pious Reader,' and its purpose was to persuade the reader to undertake a serious study of the New Testament, the primary source of the philosophy of Christ.[2] The form of the letter, the character of the reader, and the unusual title that Erasmus chose for the composition are worth examining, for all have some bearing on the *Novum instrumentum* and Erasmus' hopes for the work he had undertaken.

In the *De conscribendis epistolis* (1522), a textbook on writing letters, Erasmus described the form and structure of a letter, as well as the style appropriate to the writer's intention.[3] With regard to the structure, he repeated the traditional arrangement of material recommended in rhetorical manuals of late antiquity and in the medieval *artes dictandi*. These stated that a letter should consist of five parts: the *salutatio* (salutation), whose many forms reflected the patterns of social engagement within the structure of contemporary society; the *exordium* (introduction), often called the *captatio benevolentiae*, because it was intended to 'capture the good will' of the recipient; the *narratio* (narration), which set out the circumstances prompting the letter; the *argumentatio* (argument) or more precisely the *petitio* (petition), since letters often conveyed a request; and the *conclusio* (conclusion), a brief summary of the points already made. The intention or purpose of the letter would dictate how these parts should be handled. Erasmus' recommendation for the form of a persuasive letter reflects this pattern, and the *Paraclesis* conforms to it in general.[4] Erasmus composed for it a highly wrought *captatio benevolentiae*. The *narratio* states the circumstance that occasioned the plea, namely that Christian scholars prefer any study to that of the Gospels. The *petitio*, with

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1 The three essays are *Paraclesis*, *Methodus*, and *Apologia*; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 38 and 40.

2 As early as the second century, Justin Martyr (c 100–c 165) spoke of the teaching of Christ as 'philosophy': 'Considering his words carefully, I found this philosophy alone to be safe and practical' (*Dialogue with Trypho* 8). For an interesting outline of Erasmus' growing understanding of the *philosophia Christi* see R.R. Post *The Modern Devotion: Confrontation with Reformation and Humanism* trans Mary Foran (Leiden 1968) 658. For Groote and the Modern Devotion see Translator's Note 400 n23.

3 For the structure, particularly as applied to letters of persuasion, see CWE 25 108 (section 45) and 128–9 (section 46).

4 Cf *De conscribendis epistolis* CWE 25 145 (section 47).

its supporting arguments, occupies the bulk of the treatise. The letter is completed with a compelling *conclusio*.[5]

Erasmus also described in the *De conscribendis epistolis* the style appropriate to a letter.[6] In general, the style should be flexible, adapted to the subject, to the circumstances, and to the reader. The style of a letter written to persuade, like the *Paraclesis*, '... should be powerful and spirited in exhortations ... effective and pithy in persuasion.' If the style remains 'refined, learned, and sane,' certain extravagances of manner that might be considered faults in other genres can 'readily be excused.' For example, '... if it is a bit elaborate and reeks of the lamp, then it was written for a scholar.' The first sentences of the *Paraclesis* are more than a little elaborate in style and reek strongly of the lamp. They are, in fact, a kind of Catherine wheel extravaganza of learning, shooting sparks in all directions, and at the same time an exuberant, tongue-in-cheek parody of a scholarly *captatio benevolentiae*. Erasmus was writing for scholars who could savour the erudition and perhaps enjoy the wit.

It is well to keep in mind the scholarly destination of Erasmus' New Testament, for the expression 'pious reader,' a simple translation of Erasmus' *pius lector*, might suggest a reader characterized by a vague religiosity of mind; this was not the quality that Erasmus looked for in the readers of the *1516 Novum instrumentum* with its apparatus of annotations. The Latin adjective *pius* describes a person who is aware of the responsibilities and obligations due to others and is prepared to honour them. When used in a Christian context, the 'other' is usually God. The pious or godly reader whom Erasmus addresses is one who would honour God by bringing to the study of the Gospels a mind that delights in knowledge, is devoted to accuracy, and is willing to examine closely each word of the text. Because the *Paraclesis* is emotional in its appeal, because it supports vernacular translations of the Scriptures, and because it asserts that the true theologian teaches by the example of his life, it could be thought to support an anti-intellectual approach to Scripture. But this is not so. The *Paraclesis* rested on the assumption on which Erasmus had prepared his entire New Testament: before it is possible

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5 In the translation that follows the parts may be identified as follows: *captatio benevolentiae*: 'When … simplest' 404–7; *narratio*: 'To begin then … serious enough' 407–9; *petitio*: 'But how … meditating on the gospel of Christ' 409–22; *conclusio*: 'Therefore … your very eyes' 422. For an alternative structural analysis see Gerhard B. Winkler *Erasmus von Rotterdam und die Einleitungsschriften zum Neuen Testament: formale strukturen und theologischer Sinn* (Münster 1974) 37–40.

6 *De conscribendis epistolis* CWE 25 19–20 section 6

to read the Gospels accurately and to live according to the gospel way, a reliable text is required and a proper understanding of its meaning. In *1516* Erasmus addressed the *Paraclesis* to scholars and theologians whose knowledge and interests were similar to his own, who could benefit from the Greek text that he provided and the annotations that he wrote to accompany it, and who then would be in a position to instruct others in a way that was truly beneficial. Such a reader would understand the Greek word that he chose as the title and its rich significance for Christian thought.[7]

*Paraclesis* is the transliteration of a Greek word that conveys three distinguishable meanings: (1) a call for help or summons; (2) an exhortation or address; and (3) a consolation.[8] It is clear from the second sentence of the *Paraclesis* – '... exhorting all mortals ... and summoning them as with a clarion call ...' – how Erasmus intended *paraclesis* to be understood here. But the *Paraclesis* is more than a simple summons to the reader to study the philosophy of Christ: it is also a call for help; it is a summons also to the 'Paraclete,' the Holy Spirit, who acts not only as the advocate, intercessor, comforter, and strengthener of sinful mortals but also as their teacher. As Jesus told his disciples, the Paraclete is the Spirit of Truth that would be sent by the Father to 'teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.'[9] This Spirit teaches the philosophy of Christ to all who are willing to learn; and the urgency of the summons that Erasmus issued to

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7 In the 1516, 1519, and 1522 editions of the New Testament, which presupposed some knowledge of Greek on the part of the reader, the simple title *Paraclesis ad pium lectorem* was sufficient. But when the *Paraclesis* appeared in other publications for a wider audience, this Greek word transliterated received some explanation, an explanation often incorporated into the title, for which see *Paraclesis* 404 with n2. In some vernacular versions the word *paraclesis* disappeared from the title, replaced with its vernacular equivalent, as in the earliest English translation, William Roye *An exhortation to the diligent studye of scripture AND An exposition in to the seventh chaptre of the pistle to the Corinthians* (Antwerp: Hans Luft 1529), ed Douglas H. Parker (Toronto 2000); and a German version, *Eine tröstliche Ermahnung an alle Christen, dass sie sich der heiligen Schrift allein halten* (Zürich: Christoph Froschauer 1542).

8 Cf LSJ *παράκλησις*. In his annotation on Rom 15:4 ('through patience and the comfort') Erasmus notes that *paraclesis* means both 'comfort' and 'exhortation' CWE 56 394.

9 For the Paraclete, ie the Holy Spirit, as advocate, comforter, and the teacher who leads into the truth see John 14:26 (AV), also 14:16–17 and 16:13; and the paraphrases on these verses CWE 46 171–4, 187. For the Paraclete as both comforter and advocate in the exegetical tradition see CWE 46 171 n20.

the reader (and through the reader to the Holy Spirit, the divine teacher and helper) is proof of his belief that the world needs above all else to love and understand the gospel of Christ.[10]

There were several ways in which Erasmus and his contemporaries could approach the study of the Scriptures. The approved way was the scholastic method. In this, the Bible was studied thoroughly, but as a repository of proof texts to be used in establishing or refuting theological dogmas. The texts were studied apart from their context and examined in accordance with the rules of Aristotelian logic. The *Sententiae* of Peter Lombard, the standard manual of theology for four hundred years, sanctified the method; the *Summa theologiae* of St Thomas Aquinas showed it at its best.

During his years as a student of theology in Paris (1495–9), Erasmus was exposed to the scholastic method and was not favourably impressed. Shortly after he left Paris and while his impressions were still fresh, he wrote to John Colet about 'the modern class of theologians, who spend their lives in sheer hair-splitting and sophistical quibbling,' who 'exhaust the intelligence by a kind of sterile and thorny subtlety'; and he complained that 'we are seduced by the attractions of a perverted and insatiable passion for quibbling ... we quarrel over insignificant trifles ... we sometimes debate questions of a sort intolerable to truly religious men, as when we ask whether God could have taken the form of the Devil or an ass.'[11] His rejection of the scholastic authorities in the *Paraclesis*, though courteously expressed, is firm: the authority of the schoolmen cannot rival the authority of Christ.[12]

Two new methods of study and interpretation, however, were beginning to attract attention, particularly among the Neoplatonists of Florence. One derived from the tradition of Jewish mysticism, which interpreted Old Testament thought by ways revealed in the Cabbala.[13] These, it was thought,

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10 Erasmus' choice of the word *paraclesis* to designate a call to an essentially ethical position recalls Paul's use of the cognate verb *parakaleo* in Rom 12:1; cf F.F. Bruce *The Letter of Paul to the Romans* 2nd ed (Leicester UK 1985) 213: 'Paul tends to use this verb (*parakaleo*) at turning-points in his argument, especially in introducing an ethical exhortation (cf also 15:30, 16:17).'

11 Ep 108:24–51

12 Cf *Paraclesis* 418–19 and *Moria* CWE 27 129.

13 Three techniques were practised: *gematria*, in which numerical equivalents are assigned to the letters of the alphabet and when they are added, they reveal the relationship between words; *temura*, in which the substitution of one letter for another in accordance with certain rules reveals the connections between words; *notarikon*, in which a word is treated as if formed by the initial letters of an acrostic and is thus shown to conceal a significant expression.

might throw light on the meaning of the New Testament as well.[14] The other revived the Neoplatonic tradition of mystic interpretation preserved in the body of writings known as the Hermetic Corpus. Some humanist scholars, friends of Erasmus among them, were engaged in these new studies.

Johann Reuchlin, the Hebrew scholar, was one of these. He had been introduced to the Christian interpretation of the Cabbala by Pico della Mirandola and had studied under Jewish scholars. He wrote two books on the subject, *De verbo mirifico* (1494) and *De arte cabalistica* (1517).[15] Erasmus was not sympathetic to this method of studying Scripture. He made a clear distinction between the value of the canonical Hebrew Scriptures and the value of rabbinical commentaries and esoteric interpretations that claimed to explain their true meaning and significance. He supported wholeheartedly the trilingual college at the University of Louvain, established for the study of the three 'classic languages,' Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and praised Reuchlin's knowledge of Hebrew language and letters;[16] but he had no time for 'Talmud, Cabbala, tetragrammaton, *Gates of Light*, words, words, words.'[17] In fact, Erasmus distanced himself from Reuchlin: these esoteric mysteries

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14 Pico della Mirandola wrote in the *Oratio de hominis dignitate*: 'In the books of the Kabbalah I have found, – God is my witness, – less of the religion of Moses than of the religion of Christ: the mystery of the Trinity, the Incarnation of the Word, the divinity of the Messiah. On the subject of original sin, redemption through Christ, the heavenly Jerusalem, the fall of the rebel angels, the angelic choirs, Purgatory, the pains of Hell, I have read the same things as we read every day in Paul and Dionysius, in Jerome and Augustine'; *Oratio de hominis dignitate* ed E. Garin (Florence 1942) 160, quoted by François Secret in his edition of Johann Reuchlin *De arte cabalistica* (Paris 1973) 5.

15 Summaries of both can be found in J.L. Blau *The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance* (New York 1944) 41–59.

16 Eg in his letter to Cardinal Raffaele Riario (15 May 1515), Ep 333:112–36, requesting the cardinal's support for Reuchlin. For Erasmus' support of the trilingual college see 'New Testament Scholarship' 97 with n391.

17 Ep 798:22–3, and see 23n for an explanation of tetragrammaton and *Gates of Light*, the title of an abridged translation of a cabbalistic work published (Augsburg 1516) by Paulus Ricius, a converted Jew, of which Reuchlin owned a copy and which he valued highly. By 'words, words, words' (*inania nomina* 'empty / meaningless words / names'), Erasmus may not have meant 'just talk' but have intended a reference to the hidden significance of words revealed by cabbalistic methods of interpretation. Reuchlin was deeply impressed by the results of the method and showed in *De verbo mirifico* how it led finally to the name 'Jesus,' the most powerful word of all. Cf *Apologia* 468 with nn66, 67.

did not offer a form of exegesis calculated to win the ploughman and weaver to the love and imitation of Christ.[18]

The Hermetic Corpus consists of Greek works emanating in antiquity from Egypt, attributed to Hermes Trismegistus; somewhat similar to these were the *Chaldaean Oracles*, thought to have emanated from the East.[19] The eleventh-century Byzantine scholar Michael Psellus had written commentaries on these texts; they were studied, translated, and edited by Marsilio Ficino and the Florentine Platonists, and by others who shared their interests.[20] Erasmus' friend Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples had visited Florence in the winter of 1491–2, been introduced to the Hermetic texts by Ficino, and published an edition of them in Paris in 1505. He was intrigued by astrology and, like Reuchlin, by number mysticism. John Colet, a close friend of Erasmus, corresponded with Ficino and was particularly attracted to Neoplatonism and the works of Pseudo-Dionysius. But Erasmus could not encourage such studies, for however intellectually fascinating investigations of this kind might be, they could not contribute to an understanding of Christ's mission on earth or offer guidance for imitating his life. In the *Paraclesis* he cautions readers against knowledge introduced 'from the Chaldaeans or Egyptians' and 'doctrine ... from Egypt or Syria.'[21] For Erasmus, the appropriate study for Christians was the study invited by the question posed in the *De philosophia evangelica*: 'Why was it important for God's very Son to become man and to make known to us the way of salvation through his own teaching?'[22]

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18 Cf Erasmus' comment in Ep 1033:40–2: 'I have never had any connection with Reuchlin's … business. Cabbala and Talmud, whatever they may be, have never appealed to me.' The ploughman and the weaver are famous images in the Erasmian hermeneutic; cf *Paraclesis* 411 with n42.

19 Hermes Trismegistus, ie 'Thrice-Greatest Hermes,' was regarded as equivalent to the Egyptian god Thoth, protector of knowledge. For a discussion of the Hermetic Corpus and the Chaldaean Oracles see Brian P. Copenhaver *Hermetica: The Greek Corpus Hermetica and the Latin Asclepius in a New English Translation with Notes and Introduction* (Cambridge 1992) xiii–xlv.

20 Marsilio Ficino (1433–99) completed a translation of the Hermetic Corpus into Latin in 1463; cf P.O. Kristeller *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino* trans Virginia Conant (Gloucester MA 1964) 17. For Ficino and the Florentine Platonists see also CEBR II 27–30.

21 Cf *Paraclesis* 408–9 with n28. 'Chaldaeans' probably refers to the *Chaldaean Oracles*, 'Egypt' to Hermes Trismegistus, and 'Syria' to the cabbalistic texts. 'Syriac' is Erasmus' expression for Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus, and Aramaic is the language in which many of the cabbalistic texts were written.

22 Cf *De philosophia evangelica* in 'Separate Latin Editions' 730.

In contrast to such profitless studies were two elements of contemporary thought that were congenial to Erasmus' personal faith and seem to have contributed to his distinctive theology. These are the *Devotio moderna* and the *philosophia perennis*,[23] the latter an aspect of Florentine Platonism that he could embrace with enthusiasm. The influence of both can be seen in the *Paraclesis*.

The extent to which the *Devotio moderna* influenced Erasmus' understanding of the Christian message through direct contact with the Brethren of the Common Life in their hostels and in the schools with which they were associated has been carefully debated by scholars, and no consensus has been reached; [24] but I adopt the view of those who see the movement as foundational for Erasmus' intellectual formation. Certainly much in what has been called his 'simple piety'[25] appears to reflect the influence of the *Devotio moderna*, whether direct or indirect, on his life and thought. The movement, almost a hundred years old when Erasmus was born, had spread widely

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23 I take the term *philosophia perennis* from Paul Oskar Kristeller who adopted it as a useful designation of the Platonistic aspect of the thought of the Florentine philosophers. For the origin of this 'Platonistic aspect of thought,' see Kristeller *Renaissance Thought* 296 n89. The *Devotio moderna* 'Modern Devotion' was a movement for spiritual revival centred in the Brethren of the Common Life, a community established after 1380 in the Netherlands (Deventer, Zwolle, and Windesheim), and of which Geert de Groote (Deventer 1340–84) is recognized as founder.

24 A. Hyma called Erasmus a 'child of the Devotio Moderna … [who] never quite appreciated the source from which he received many of his ideas'; *The Youth of Erasmus* (New York 1968) 125. Kristeller described him as 'a moral and religious thinker deeply rooted in the traditions of the Devotio Moderna' ('Erasmus from an Italian Perspective' *Renaissance Quarterly* 23 [1970] 1), while A.G. Dickens and Whitney R.D. Jones assert that the movement was 'a fundamental source of [his] "*philosophia Christi*"'; *Erasmus the Reformer* [London 1994] 212–13. In contrast, Edmund Colledge stated: 'Contrast Erasmus with any of the founders or leaders of the Devotio moderna, and see at once how poles apart from them he is' ('Erasmus, the Brethren of the Common Life, and the Devotio Moderna' *Erasmus in English* 7 [1975] 3); and R.R. Post concluded that it was not Erasmus' years of association with the Brethren that awakened his spiritual nature but rather the influence of John Colet; *The Modern Devotion: Confrontation with Reformation and Humanism* (Leiden 1968) 658–73.

25 The phrase is P.O. Kristeller's, from his article 'Erasmus from an Italian Perspective' *Renaissance Quarterly* 23 (1970) 6–7. As with the expression 'pious reader' (cf 395), 'simple' can be misleading. It is not a synonym of 'easy.' Nothing could be more exacting than the single-minded devotion to the example of Christ that Erasmus desired to inspire. The opposite of 'simple piety'

through the Low Countries and Germany. It advocated devotional reading of the Scriptures,[26] recommended their translation into the vernacular,[27] and encouraged a Christocentric spirituality that dwelt on Christ's humanity and virtues.[28] Erasmus urged this same form of piety at many points throughout his New Testament scholarship. I note here in particular that in the *Paraclesis* and the *De philosophia evangelica* ideas are articulated that had already found vivid expression in the *De imitatione Christi* of Thomas à Kempis (c 1380–1471), the most influential work to come out of the *Devotio moderna*.[29] And while it may be no more than a coincidence, it is interesting to note that Geert de Groote was deeply committed, as was Erasmus, to the reform of monastic life and to the study of the Bible – the Gospels and Epistles above all – as the foundation of every Christian life.

Although Erasmus rarely mentioned Marsilio Ficino or the Florentine Platonists, their work and influence were so widely felt that Paul Oskar Kristeller could write, 'There are no thinkers in the sixteenth century who did not use … the newly acquired writings of Plato and the Neoplatonists ... or the apocryphal works attributed to the Pythagoreans, Orpheus, Zoroaster,

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is the complex, intellectual theology of the schoolmen and the use (Erasmus might have said, 'the misuse') of the Bible by professional theologians as a mine of proof texts rather than as a guide to life in Christ.

26 'Let us be attentive and unremitting in our study of sacred writings; let each one of us have in our possession a book of canonical or otherwise genuine and approved writing ... and let us read a passage from it every day for the spiritual refreshment of our souls.' 'Original Constitution of the Brethren of the Common Life at Deventer' in A. Hyma *The Christian Renaissance: A History of the 'Devotio Moderna'* 2nd ed (Hamden CT 1965) 444.

27 In 1383, the year before he died of the plague, Geert de Groote began to translate liturgical texts and passages of the Bible from Latin into Dutch for the sake of those who did not understand Latin and could not, therefore, benefit from what they heard at the divine service. As well as translating the texts, he provided them with glosses and other explanations; Johannes Busch *Chronicon Windeshemense* ed Karl Grube (Halle 1886) 255; and Hyma *The Christian Renaissance* (cited in n26 above) 16–17 and 165. Gerard Zerbolt, Groote's contemporary at Deventer, argued strongly for the propriety and use of vernacular texts in his successful defence of the Common Life against the attacks of Franciscans and Dominicans; cf Hyma *The Christian Renaissance* (in n26 above) 72–6.

28 Cf Geert de Groote: 'The root of all your study and the mirror of life is, first, the Gospel of Christ because there is found the life of Christ.' John Van Engen *Devotio moderna: Basic Writings* (New York 1988) 70.

29 For examples of such ideas see eg *Paraclesis* 408 with n24 and *De philosophia evangelica* in 'Separate Latin Editions' 730 with nn10, 11.

and Hermes Trismegistus.'[30] Erasmus was no exception. He first read Plato in Ficino's translation and until 1507 consistently quoted Ficino's version whenever he wished to cite Plato.[31] Although he criticized the esoteric interpretation of Scripture encouraged by the Neoplatonists, their idea of a single system of moral conduct available to pagans, Jews, and Christians commended itself to him. This was an idea dear to the Renaissance Platonists. Indeed, Kristeller thought that the concept of a universal moral system was an achievement that could be attributed to them:[32] he noted that Ficino was 'convinced that Platonic philosophy and theology, which had its basis in human reason, agreed fundamentally with Jewish and Christian religion and theology which rested on faith and revelation. Both traditions were equally old and lasting instruments of divine providence.'[33] In fact, Maria Cytowska attributed to Ficino himself the idea of a universal moral system: 'Ficin est l'auteur d'une thèse sur la révélation éternelle du Verbe-*Logos*. Selon lui, les principes de la *pia philosophia* sont révélés aussi bien par la *Bible* que par les écrivains de temps plus reculés ... De l'avis de Ficin, l'éternelle et immuable vérité présentée par des symboles dans les théologies poétiques primitives a été expliquée sous l'angle philosophique par Platon et révélée par le Christ.'[34]

Erasmus responded well to this notion. He saw it as consistent with the unity of God; it reflected the unity in his own thought, nurtured as it had been by both pagan and Christian sources; it had as well the approval of St Paul,[35] and he repeatedly articulates the idea in his works. It is illustrated in the *Paraclesis* by a comparison of the moral teaching found in the works of pagan philosophers with that in the gospel of Christ, and in the *De philosophia*

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30 Kristeller *Renaissance Thought* 31. Zoroaster (Zarathustra) was a quasi-mythical figure of uncertain date regarded as the founder of Zoroastrianism, a religion long dominant in Iran; the Chaldaean Oracles were sometimes attributed to him; ibidem 53.

31 M. Cytowska 'Érasme de Rotterdame et Marsile Ficin son maître' *Eos* 63 (1975) 173

32 'The very concept of a philosophical tradition, subject to many changes and variations but basically uniform and continuous, seems to have been formulated by the Renaissance Platonists.' Kristeller *Renaissance Thought* 131.

33 Kristeller *Renaissance Thought* 131

34 M. Cytowska 'Érasme de Rotterdame et Marsile Ficin son maître' *Eos* 63 (1975) 167

35 Cf eg Rom 2:14–15: 'For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness ...'

*evangelica* by comparisons between the teaching of Socrates and Christ and between the teaching of the Old Testament and the New.[36] The universality of the philosophy of Christ, 'wisdom which is loved, and is of Christ,'[37] strengthened its authority and enhanced its attractions.

But despite the interest and value of such studies, the best way of gaining a deeper understanding of the philosophy of Christ – best because most direct – was to meditate on the life and work of Christ as recorded in the Gospels. For this, a good text, a good translation, and good annotations were required. These Erasmus hoped to supply in the *Novum instrumentum*.

The text of the *Paraclesis* was printed in LB VI 3r–4v (1703–6) and by Annemarie and Hajo Holborn in *Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus: Ausgewählte Werke* (Munich 1933; repr 1964) 138–49. The Holborn edition provides a collation of the text as printed in the three editions of the *Novum Testamentum* published by Froben in 1516, 1519, and 1522. The earliest English translation of William Roye, a friend of William Tyndale, has been noted above.[38] John C. Olin translated the *Paraclesis* for inclusion in his *Christian Humanism and the Reformation: Selected Writings of Erasmus* (New York 1965) 92–106, and a French version by P. Mesnard appeared in *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et Renaissance* 13 (1951) 35–42.

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36 Cf *Paraclesis* 415–16 and *De philosophia evangelica* in 'Separate Latin Editions' 730–3. The theme is (famously) represented in the colloquy 'The Godly Feast' CWE 39 192:5–194:36, and appears in the *Ratio* 550; cf n308. Note the comments of James McConica: '... the explicit desire to show the harmony between classical wisdom and Christian teaching ... is a chord struck again and again through the entirety of the *Adagia*'; 'Erasmus' rooted conviction about the interrelatedness of pagan and Christian wisdom is thus proclaimed at the very outset of the *Enchiridion*.' *Erasmus* (Oxford 1991) 27 and 53.

37 J.K. McConica *Erasmus* (Oxford 1991) 45

38 Cf n7. It should be noted that the *Paraclesis* is printed in both LB VI (1516 text) and LB X (1519 with only a minor change from 1516). For the convenience of the reader we identify the text given in LB V with its more detailed mapping.

# A *PARACLESIS*[1] TO THE PIOUS READER[2]

When, excellent reader, the distinguished writer Firmianus Lactantius,[3] whose style Jerome particularly admired,[4] was beginning his defence of the

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1 For the meaning of *paraclesis* and for the epistolary form of the work see Translator's Note, respectively 396–7 with nn8, 10 and 395 with n5.

2 The original title, used in the 1516, 1519, and 1522 editions of Erasmus' New Testament; J. Glomski and E. Rummel, *Early Editions of Erasmus at the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, Toronto* (Toronto 1994) #594, 595, 596. Occasionally the work was called simply *Paraclesis* (Glomski and Rummel #377), but usually, after the earliest editions, longer titles were employed, such as *Paraclesis, id est, exhortatio ad studium evangelicae philosophiae* 'Paraclesis, an exhortation to the study of the philosophy of the gospel' (cf Irmgard Bezzel *Erasmusdrucke des 16. Jahrhunderts in bayerischen Bibliotheken: ein bibliographisches Verzeichnis* [Stuttgart 1979] #1697, 1699, 1700); or *Paraclesis, id est, exhortatio ad sanctissimum ac saluberrimum Christianae philosophiae studium* 'Paraclesis, that is, an exhortation to the holy and health-giving study of the philosophy of Christ' (eg Bezzel #1693, 1694; *adhortatio* for *exhortatio*); and most frequently, the second title with the further addition, *ut videlicet Evangelicis ac Apostolicis literis legendis, si non sola, saltem prima cura tribuatur*, ie '... that if not our only care, at least our first care, be given to the reading of the Gospels and the letters of the apostles' (Bezzel #1396, 1397, 1400, 1401, 1403, 1406, 1407, 1410; and Wouter Nijhoff and M.E. Kronenberg *Nederlandsche bibliographie van 1500 tot 1540* [s'Gravenhage 1962–71] #841). See further Translator's Note 396 n7.

3 Ie Lucius Caecilius Firmianus Lactantius (c 240–c 320), a rhetorician and Christian apologist, whose fine Latin style earned him the title of 'the Christian Cicero.' Cf Erasmus' Ep 49:115–16: '... Lactantius deserves [the title] of the Christian Cicero which [Rudolph] Agricola used to give him.' The Latin text of the *Paraclesis* begins with Lactantius' name, and an echo of his words concludes the introduction (cf n20 below). Lactantius stands, therefore, as a kind of tutelary genius over the work, and just as he explained and defended the truth of Christianity to learned pagan contemporaries in his *Institutiones divinae*, so Erasmus intends to explain and defend the truth and value of Christianity to learned Christian contemporaries.

In the Latin text the *Paraclesis* begins with an artistic, ornate composition, its first several sentences ('When … the one it received') complex and profuse. But this elaborately crafted introduction is more than an example of epistolary art, more than a showcase for Erasmus' mastery of the genre. 'I can write like this,' he seems to say, 'with the greatest of ease, but' (to reflect Lactantius once more) 'the simple, unadorned truth shines brightly on its own; its light is obscured by adornment.' Subsequently, the style will become simple and direct, suitable for informative, reasoned argument and persuasion.

4 Cf Jerome Ep 58.10 (ad Paulinum).

Christian religion against the pagans, he wished first of all to be given eloquence similar to that of Cicero,[5] thinking it impertinent, I suppose, to desire its equal. But as long as I am engaged in exhorting all mortals to the holy and healing study of the philosophy of Christ[6] and in summoning them as with a clarion call,[7] I would wish with all my heart – if anything is accomplished by wishes of this kind – to be granted a much different eloquence from that of Cicero – perhaps not so colourful as his, but certainly more effective. Indeed I would wish – if this has ever been granted to anyone – to have such a forceful style as the stories of the ancient poets ascribed, not altogether without reason, to Mercury who, as with a magic staff and divine lyre imposes sleep when he wishes and takes it away, forces to the Realm of the Dead whomsoever he wishes and recalls from it again;[8] or such power as they noted in Amphion and Orpheus,[9] of whom the one is said to have moved solid

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5 Lactantius *Institutiones divinae* 3.1.1; cf *Ciceronianus* CWE 28 412.

6 For the term 'philosophy of Christ' see Translator's Note 394 n2. The expression appears frequently in the *Paraphrases*, where it has been widely annotated by the translators of CWE (cf the General Indexes to the volumes); cf also the discussion in CWE 66 xxi–xxviii.

7 'Clarion call': *classicum* 'a battle signal upon a trumpet'

8 Mercury, the Greek Hermes, was the herald of the Olympian gods, and since a herald must state clearly and persuasively the business of those who send him, he came to be associated with oratory; cf eg Horace *Odes* 1.10.1; Acts 14:12: 'And they called ... Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker.' One of his attributes is the staff – in his case made of gold and endowed with magic properties – borne by heralds as a sign of peace and by other officials as a sign of authority. With this he induces sleep (Virgil *Aeneid* 4.244; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 1.716) and guides the souls of the dead (Homer *Odyssey* 24.1–4; Virgil *Aeneid* 4.242–4; Horace *Odes* 1.10.17–20). For Mercury as inventor of the lyre, 'divine' because invented by a god, see *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* 25–51 and Horace *Odes* 1.10.6. The exuberance of references here to mythical and historical figures accents the ornate character of the *captatio benevolentiae*.

9 Erasmus moves easily from the persuasive power of words (Mercury) to the persuasive power of music (Amphion and Orpheus). That the two were closely linked in his mind can be seen from Ep 1304, a letter written to Pope Adrian VI in 1522 as the preface to his edition of the younger Arnobius' commentary on the Psalms. In this letter the persuasive power of the text of the Psalms and the persuasive power of music are not distinguished, and, as in this passage, Mercury and Orpheus are cited along with Timotheus (mentioned just below); cf Ep 1304:383–442.

rocks,[10] the other to have drawn oak and ash trees with his lyre;[11] or such as the Gauls ascribed to their Ogmius, who led everyone about wherever he wished by means of fine chains fastened from his tongue to their ears;[12] or such as mythical antiquity ascribed to Marsyas;[13] or, lest we linger too long among fables, certainly such as Alcibiades attributed to Socrates,[14] the Old Comedy to Pericles: an eloquence which does not simply charm the ears by a pleasure soon to die, but which leaves barbs clinging in the hearts of those who hear;[15] an eloquence that seizes, transforms, and sends the listener away a much different person from the one it received. We read that the celebrated musician Timotheus often inflamed Alexander the Great to zeal for war by singing songs in the Dorian mode.[16] Nor were people lacking

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10 Amphion, who had been given a lyre by Hermes, helped his brother build the walls of Thebes by moving the building stones with the music of his lyre; Horace *Ars poetica* 395.

11 Orpheus, a Thracian singer, charmed trees, wild beasts, and even stones with his music; Horace *Odes* 1.12.12.

12 A Gallic god, a picture of whom was described by the Greek satirist Lucian (born c AD 120) in *Heracles* 3; cf *De copia* CWE 24 590, where the god is called the Gallic Hercules.

13 Marsyas, a satyr or silenus, was a flute player and the inventor of a form of music for the flute; Apollodorus *Bibliotheca* 1.24; Pausanias *Description of Greece* 10.30.9.

14 Alcibiades, when praising Socrates in Plato's *Symposium*, compares his power of persuasion with that of Marsyas: 'Moreover I say that [Socrates] is like the satyr Marsyas. ... Are you not a flute player? And far more wonderful than he. For he used to charm people by musical instruments ... while you produce the same effect without instruments by means of your pleasing words.' Plato *Symposium* 215B–216C.

15 Cicero (*Brutus* 15.59) quoted Eupolis, one of the most distinguished writers of the Old Comedy, as saying that Peitho (ie 'Persuasion,' sometimes personified as a goddess) '... ever sat on the lips of Pericles,' and again (*Brutus* 9.38), that Pericles' oratory did not simply delight but 'left stings in the minds of the hearers'; cf John Maxwell Edmonds *The Fragments of Attic Comedy after Meineke, Bergk, and Kock Augmented … and Completely Translated into English Verse* (Leiden 1957) I 341 frag 98 (=94 Kock; Meinecke *Com. fragmenta* 2.246, Kock *Comicorum Atticorum fragmenta* 1.281 frag 94). Erasmus recalls the image in *Ecclesiastes* 3: 'But the goal of the pious preacher is to leave in the minds of the hearers barbs that hold fast …' CWE 68 806.

16 Several ancient writers described the effect of music on Alexander the Great: Dio Chrysostom *Discourses* 1.1–3; Basil the Great *To Young Men* 8.7–8; Plutarch *Moralia* 2.2.2; Athenaeus *Deipnosophists* 12.54.538. Details of their stories differ, but no account states that the effective music was composed in the Dorian

long ago who believed that nothing was more effective than the prayers that the Greeks call 'epodes.'[17] But if there exists anywhere any such incantation and any power of harmony filled with true inspiration,[18] any Peitho who is truly persuasive,[19] I would desire her to help me now, that I may persuade all people of that most beneficial of all beliefs. Yet this, rather, should be my prayer: that Christ himself, whose business is in hand, will so tune the strings of my lyre that this song will affect and move all hearts to their very core; and for this to take place, there is no need for the arguments and ornaments of the rhetoricians. Nothing else would more surely produce what I wish than truth herself, whose speech is most effective when it is simplest.[20]

To begin, then: I do not wish at present to reopen the complaint – by no means new but alas! all too just, and perhaps never more just than at this time when everyone is so passionately devoted to his own interests – that the philosophy of Christ, and this philosophy alone, is scoffed at even by some Christians, neglected by most, and discussed by few, although without enthusiasm (for I will not say without sincerity). In all the other branches of knowledge that human industry has produced, there is nothing so hidden, so recondite that keen minds have not investigated it, nothing so difficult that 'unremitting labour'[21] has not conquered it. How is it then that this philosophy is the only one that is not embraced with the enthusiasm that is its due by all of us who, even in the title by which we are known, confess the name[22] of Christ? Platonists, Pythagoreans, Academicians, Stoics, Cynics,

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mode. This innovation may have been Erasmus' contribution, perhaps suggested by Plato *Republic* 3.399A–B, where the Phrygian and Dorian modes are pronounced to be the only styles suitable for the ideal state, the Phrygian to encourage wisdom and restraint in civic life, the Dorian to inspire courage and endurance in military engagements.

17 Ie *ἐπῳδάς* 'incantations, spells'

18 Ie *ἐνθουσιασμόν* 'possession by a god'

19 Peitho, ie 'Persuasion,' sometimes treated as the name of a goddess (eg Hesiod *Works and Days* 73, *Theogony* 349) and so used by Cicero *Brutus* 15.59; cf n15 above.

20 Cf Lactantius *Institutiones divinae* 3.1: '... God has ordained this to be the nature [of truth]: that the simple, naked truth shines with greater splendour, because its own beauty is sufficient adornment.'

21 Virgil *Georgics* 1.145–6: *Labor omnia vicit / improbus* 'Unremitting labour overcame everything.'

22 name] *nomen* first in *1519*; in *1516*, *factionem* literally 'party' ie 'confess allegiance to Christ.' Cf Acts 11:26 (VG): *ita ut cognominarentur primum Antiochiae discipuli, christiani* 'And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.'

Peripatetics, Epicureans have all learned thoroughly the teachings of their schools, know them by heart, fight for them, are even prepared to die for them sooner than give up the defence of their founder. Why are we not more ready to show such enthusiasm for Christ, the founder of our faith and our Lord? Who would not think it deeply shocking if someone who professed the philosophy of Aristotle did not know what he thought about the origin of thunderbolts, about prime matter, about the infinite,[23] matters that do not make one happy if known or unhappy if unknown?[24] Yet we who are consecrated to Christ in so many ways, bound to him by so many sacraments, do we not think it shocking and shameful to be ignorant of his teachings, which offer sure and certain happiness to all?

But what purpose is served here by piling up arguments, when it is a kind of impious madness to compare Christ to Zeno[25] or Aristotle, and Christ's doctrine to their petty pronouncements, to choose the mildest term. Let their adherents claim for the leaders of their sects whatever credit they can or wish. Certain it is that our teacher alone was sent from heaven; that he alone could teach unchanging truth since he is eternal wisdom;[26] that he alone, the only author of our salvation, taught the means of salvation; that he alone exemplified completely all that he ever taught;[27] that he alone is able to fulfil all that he has promised. If something comes from the Chaldaeans or Egyptians,[28] our desire to know it is keener simply because it has been imported[29] from a distant land, and its value derives in part from the fact that it has come from far away. Often we torment ourselves with the fantasies of some nonentity – I will not say imposter – not simply without benefit

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23 On thunderbolts see Aristotle *Meteorologica* 3.1 (371a–b), on the concept of infinity *Physica* 3.4–5 (203b–208a), on prime matter *Metaphysica* 9.7 (1049a).

24 Cf Thomas à Kempis *De imitatione Christi* 1.3.3: 'What is to be gained by quibbling over secret and obscure matters for ignorance of which we shall not be condemned at the Last Judgment'; also 1.2.7: 'There are many things that profit the soul little or nothing to know.' For the influence of the *Devotio moderna* and Thomas à Kempis on Erasmus see Translator's Note 400–1 with nn23–9 above.

25 Zeno (335–263 BC), Greek philosopher, founder of the Stoic school

26 Christ the Word of God (John 1:1–14) is also the Wisdom of God (Wisd of Sol 9:1–2,10–11,17; cf 1 Cor 1:24, 30).

27 Cf *De philosophia evangelica*: 'He alone taught and represented all the precepts and examples of perfect goodness'; 'Separate Latin Editions' 735.

28 A reference apparently to the studies pursued at the Florentine Academy by Marsilio Ficino and his friends; cf Translator's Note 399 with n21.

29 imported] *importatum* first in *1522*; in *1516* and *1519*, *deportatum* 'carried away'

but with a great waste of time, to mention no more serious consequence, although the lack of benefit is serious enough.

But how does it come about that a similar desire does not stimulate the minds of Christians,[30] since they have been persuaded, as is in fact true, that this doctrine has come not from Egypt or Syria[31] but from heaven itself? Why do we not all think as follows: What a new and wonderful kind of philosophy this must be! For in order to transmit it to mortals, he who was God became man, he who was immortal became mortal, he who was in the heart of the Father came down to earth. Whatever it is that the wonderful founder of our faith came to teach, it must be something great, something by no means commonplace, since there had already been so many schools of excellent philosophers, so many distinguished prophets. Why do we not study it here point by point, investigate it, examine it with reverent curiosity,[32] especially since this kind of wisdom, so remarkable that it has rendered foolish once and for all the entire wisdom of this world,[33] can be drunk from these few books as from the clearest streams with far less trouble than the teaching of Aristotle, preserved in so many thorny volumes, with all the long and contradictory commentaries of his interpreters? And, need I add, with greater profit? It is unnecessary for you to approach this philosophy furnished with such a load of burdensome knowledge. Provision for the way is simple and available to everyone. Only see that you bring to it a pious and ready mind and one that is, above all, endowed with a sincere and pure faith. Only be willing to learn, and you have advanced far in this philosophy.[34] It supplies as its teacher the Spirit, which is imparted to none so freely as to the sincere of heart. The systems of the philosophers, apart from their promise of a false happiness, rebuff the inquiring minds of many through the sheer difficulty of their concepts. This philosophy accommodates itself equally to all. It lowers itself to infants, adjusting to their need. It nourishes them with milk, carries them, cherishes and supports them, does everything necessary until we

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30 minds of Christians] *Christianos animos* first in *1519*; in *1516*, *Christianos humanos animos*. The double qualifier of *1516* may reflect the texts of two draft versions.

31 Cf Translator's Note n21.

32 The *De philosophia evangelica* reflects the general sentiment expressed here.

33 Cf 1 Cor 1:20 and 3:19.

34 Cf in the *Ratio* (491–3), enlarging upon the *Methodus*, the similar advice on the proper approach to the reading of the Scriptures; likewise in the preface to the *Paraphrase on Matthew* CWE 45 11–12, 14–15.

grow strong in Christ.[35] Again, while it does not fail the lowest, the highest also find it worthy of admiration. Indeed, the farther you have advanced into the riches of this philosophy, the farther you withdraw yourself from the splendour of other philosophers. For the inexperienced, it is perfectly simple; for the experienced, it is utterly demanding. This philosophy rejects no age, no sex, no rank, no condition. The sun above is not so universal and accessible to all as is the teaching of Christ. It keeps no one at a distance except the person who distances himself, to his own detriment.

I disagree entirely with those who do not want divine literature to be translated into the vernacular tongues and read by ordinary people,[36] as if Christ taught such convoluted doctrine that it could be understood only by a handful of theologians, and then with difficulty; or as if the defence of the Christian religion were contingent on this, that it remain unknown. Perhaps it is expedient to conceal the secrets of kings,[37] but Christ desires his

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35 Cf 1 Cor 3:1–2 and the paraphrase on these verses, CWE 43 50–2 with n3. See also Geert de Groote: 'And Holy Scripture humbly favors children, leading even the great from small things to larger, accommodating itself to all and averse to none, profound for the great and yet open to little children'; John Van Engen *Devotio moderna: Basic Writings* (New York 1988) 100.

36 Cf the preface to the *Paraphrase on Matthew* CWE 45 10–18, to which Erasmus refers in his letter to Noël Béda (15 June 1525), Ep 1581:816–27. The idea was not new. In the letter to Béda Erasmus recalled (lines 816–27) people reading the Bible in French and German when he was a boy; cf *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* CWE 71 45. The Modern Devotion encouraged vernacular translations; cf Translator's Note 401 with n27. Craig Thompson notes the number of vernacular translations available and the range of languages in 'Scripture for the Ploughboy and Some Others,' *Studies in the Continental Background of Renaissance English: Essays Presented to John Lievsay*, ed Dale B.J. Randall and George Walton Williams (Durham NC 1977) 6 with n7. Many of Erasmus' contemporaries opposed vernacular translations, fearing popular misunderstanding of the Scriptures, eg Noël Béda; cf Ep 1579:172–90. Elsewhere Erasmus appears to qualify his statement here in the *Paraclesis*; eg even in the preface to the *Paraphrase on Matthew* CWE 45 10–11 Erasmus hesitated to put Ezekiel and the Song of Songs in the hands of the laity, a point that Béda observed in Ep 1579. But cf more particularly Erasmus' qualification of his position noted in 'New Testament Scholarship' 277 with n1167 and 346 with nn1496, 1497.

37 Cf Tobit 12:7; and *Institutio principis christiani* CWE 27 (Basel: Froben 1516), dedicated to the sixteen-year-old future emperor Charles V. Erasmus warned that sometimes, when a people 'resist what is to their own advantage,' a ruler must employ 'some benign deception' CWE 27 259–60. The heavenly king, by contrast, desires to be known as openly and as widely as possible.

mysteries[38] to be known as widely as possible.[39] I would like every woman[40] to read the Gospel, to read the Epistles of Paul. And oh, that these books were translated into every tongue of every land so that not only the Scots and the Irish but Turks and Saracens too could read and get to know them. The first stage, unquestionably, is to get to know them – somehow or other. Granted that many people would laugh; yet some would be won over. How I wish that the farmer at his plough would chant some passage from these books, that the weaver at his shuttles would sing something from them; that the traveller would relieve[41] the tedium of his journey with stories of this kind;[42] that all the discussions of all Christians would start from these books,

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38 Christ desires his mysteries] First in *1519*; in *1516*, 'the mystery of Christ desires.' On the term 'mystery' see *Methodus* n15 and the references cited there.

39 Cf Tobit 12:7; also the preface to the *Paraphrase on Matthew* CWE 45 8 and 19.

40 'Woman': *mulierculae*. *Muliercula*, a diminutive form of *mulier* 'woman,' denotes the less fortunate. Cf Craig Thompson 'Scripture for the Ploughboy and Some Others' in *Studies in the Continental Background of Renaissance English: Essays Presented to John Lievsay*, ed Dale B.J. Randall and George Walton Williams (Durham NC 1977) 8 n13: 'A common word in Erasmus' writings, *muliercula* can mean "mere woman," "housewife," or "servant-girl." It denotes a woman of minor social standing and little or no education.' In fact, Erasmus knew and corresponded with women of high rank and excellent education who could read the Latin Bible with ease and were not in need of modern vernacular translations. In 1523 he sent as a Christmas present to Margaret Roper, daughter of Thomas More, a commentary on two poems of Prudentius (cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 220 with n876), and Konrad Peutinger's wife, Margarethe, questioned Erasmus' Latin translation of the New Testament (Ep 1247:21–37). In 1528 a 'leading light of the Franciscan clan' thought Erasmus' statement here 'heretical,' but Erasmus readily justified himself; Ep 2045:240–9.

41 41 relieve] Renders *levet* 'lighten,' the reading of *1516*, *1519*, *1522*, and LB. Holborn's text has *lenet*. See H.J. de Jonge 'Deux corrections aux textes d'Érasme édités par Holborn' *Humanistica Louvaniensia* 25 (1976) 285.

42 Cf preface to the *Paraphrase on Matthew* CWE 45 7–28, where Erasmus provides two lists of unlikely characters who should read the Scriptures: (1) farmer, smith, stone cutter, prostitutes, pimps, even Turks (page 10); and (2) the ploughman at his plough, the weaver at his loom, the skipper at the rudder, and the spinner at her wheel (page 18). Compare the letter to Johann von Botzheim (August 1529), where Erasmus, reporting the criticism of Frans Titelmans, noted that the apostles spoke the language of 'cobblers, sailors, weavers both men and women, and indeed, of pimps and madams,' Ep 2206:37–9. See also *In psalmum 1* (CWE 63 31–3) and Ep 1469:83–103. For Erasmus' qualification of the absolute position taken here see n36 above.

for our daily conversation reflects in large measure what we are.[43] Let each person understand what he can; let each express what he can. Let the one who comes after not envy the one who goes before; and let the one who is ahead encourage the one who follows, not despair of him. Why do we restrict to a few a profession of faith that is common to all? Since[44] baptism, in which we make the first profession of our Christian faith, is the common possession of all Christians alike, and since the other sacraments and the reward of eternal life belong to all alike, it is illogical to believe that dogma alone should be reserved for those few whom the people today call monks and theologians. These men are a tiny fraction of the people of Christ; I only wish they were more worthy of the names by which they are called. For I am afraid you will find among theologians those who are far from deserving the title of their office,[45] men who talk of earthly, not heavenly things; and that among monks who profess to follow the poverty of Christ and to despise the world you will find an excess of worldliness. In my opinion, a man is truly a theologian who teaches not by convoluted syllogisms but by his disposition, by the expression on his face and in his eyes, and by his way of life that wealth is to be scorned;[46] that a Christian must not trust in worldly supports but must depend solely on heaven;[47] that he must not avenge a wrong;[48] that he must bless them that curse him, do good to them that abuse him;[49] that all good people are to be loved and cherished equally as members of the same body;[50] that the wicked are to be tolerated if they cannot be corrected;[51]

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43 Cf *Adagia* I vi 50, *In psalmum 1* CWE 63 31–2, and the colloquy 'The Godly Feast,' in which the guests agree to discuss a passage of Scripture while taking their meal, CWE 39 183:23–184:27.

44 'Since baptism ... an excess of worldliness': These three sentences follow the translation in Ep 1469:65–77, where they are cited as one of the criticisms levelled at Erasmus in an anonymous letter (1524) circulating in Dutch and inspired, Erasmus believed, by Nicolaas Baechem. See 'New Testament Scholarship' 265 with n1104.

45 'Title of their office': Erasmus refers to the term 'theologian,' 'one who discourses about God,' from Greek *theos* 'god' and *logos* 'speech.'

46 Cf Matt 6:19–21. Erasmus cites this precept and those that follow as precepts that represent the chief characteristics of the Christian way of life. A similar portrait of Christian living will be found in *Methodus* 440–2 and *Ratio* 517–19.

47 Cf Matt 6:31–4; also Luke 12:22–31.

48 Cf Matt 5:38–9; also Rom 12:19.

49 Cf Matt 5:44; Luke 6:27–8; Rom 12:14, 17.

50 Cf 1 Cor 12:25–6; Rom 12:4–5.

51 Cf 2 Thess 3:14–15; Rom 12:18. This view, expressed elsewhere, became problematic for Erasmus; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 284 with n1204.

that those who are despoiled of their goods, those who are deprived of their possessions,[52] those who mourn[53] are to be counted happy, not to be pitied; that death is to be desired by the godly, for it is none other than the passage to immortality.[54] If anyone filled with the Spirit of Christ preaches and inculcates these precepts and others like them, if he urges, invites, and inspires others to accept them, he is indeed a true theologian, even though a ditch digger or weaver. Also, if anyone exemplifies these teachings by his own conduct, he is indeed a great teacher.[55] Perhaps some other person, a non-Christian even, may dispute with greater subtlety how angels understand; but to persuade human beings that in this world we should live like angels,[56] pure from all stain of sin, that alone is the duty of a Christian theologian.

But if anyone should object that these precepts are somewhat crude and unsophisticated, I would answer simply that it was these crude precepts above all that Christ taught, that the apostles inculcate; and however unsophisticated they may be, they have resulted in our having so many true Christians, such multitudes of glorious martyrs. It is this philosophy, I say, unlettered as they see it, that has drawn the mightiest princes of the world, many realms and many nations, to endorse its laws, something which neither the power of tyrants nor the learning of philosophers was able to do. But I do not oppose the discussion of that kind of philosophy 'among them that are perfect'[57] if such discussions seem to be good. But the humble mass of Christians may confidently take comfort from the fact that the apostles certainly did not teach those subtle arguments; whether they knew them or not, let others decide. If princes promoted this commonplace doctrine as a

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52 Cf Matt 5:5 (VG 5:4) and the paraphrase on the verse, CWE 45 86.

53 Cf Matt 5:4 (VG 5:5); Luke 6:21.

54 Cf 2 Cor 5:1–8; Phil 1:23–4; Mark 8:34–5; Luke 9:23–4; John 14:1–3.

55 The commonplace that the good teacher exemplifies his teaching in his own life was well established in the pedagogical tradition; cf CWE 45 97 n63 and CWE 50 5 n8. Cf also 408 with n27 above, where Christ the master teacher is also the perfect exemplifier.

56 The angelic mode of cognition was a subject that interested some of the greatest Christian thinkers, among them Augustine (*De civitate Dei* 11.29) and Thomas Aquinas (*Summa theologiae* I qq 54–8). For a concise statement of their conclusions see ODCC 62–3 'Angel.' For the contrasting ethical obligation to 'live like angels' see *Ratio* 517 with n130.

57 Cf 1 Cor 2:6. 'That kind of philosophy,' ie scholastic philosophy. But see Erasmus' interpretation of this verse in his paraphrase on it, CWE 43 44–6 with nn9 and 14. The designation stands in contrast to 'this philosophy' mentioned just above (the philosophy of Christ), as a force that draws the world to itself – an Erasmian commonplace; cf n60 below.

responsibility of their position, if priests taught it in their sermons, if schoolmasters instilled it in their pupils instead of that erudite doctrine drawn from the wellsprings of Aristotle and Averroës, Christendom would not everywhere be in an almost constant state of war, the world would not seethe with such an insane desire to heap up wealth by fair means or foul, sacred and profane alike[58] would not echo with clamorous disputes. In a word, not in name and ritual only would we differ from those who do not profess the philosophy of Christ. For the responsibility of renewing and enhancing the Christian religion rests principally with these three groups: with rulers and the magistrates who govern in their stead, with bishops and the priests who represent them, and with those who instruct children in their earliest years when they respond eagerly to everything. If it should happen that these people set aside their own interests and joined together wholeheartedly in Christ, we would undoubtedly see within a few years a genuine and, as Paul says, a 'legitimate'[59] breed of Christians emerging everywhere who would transmit the philosophy of Christ not only by ceremonies and logical propositions, but with heart and soul in every aspect of their lives. The enemies of Christianity would be won over to faith in Christ far more quickly by these weapons than by threats and arms. Were we to combine all our defences, there is nothing more powerful than truth itself.[60]

No one is a Platonist who has not read the books of Plato. Is he a theologian, let alone a Christian, who has not read the literature of Christ? 'He who loves me,' he said, 'keeps my words.'[61] He himself set down this distinguishing mark. Therefore, if we are Christians truly and sincerely, if we truly believe that he was sent from heaven to teach us things that the wisdom of philosophers could not teach, if we truly expect to receive from him what no princes can give, however rich they may be, why is anything more important to us than the literature of Christ? Why does anything seem even faintly learned that departs from his teaching? Why, with respect to these writings that deserve our adoration, do we allow ourselves as much – I might almost say 'more' – liberty than secular commentators allow themselves when dealing with civil law or medical texts, so that we say whatever comes into our

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58 sacred and profane alike] First in *1519*; in *1516*, 'everything sacred and profane'

59 'Legitimate': Ie *γνήσιος* 'legitimately born, genuine, real.' Cf 1 Tim 1:2, where the term is applied to Timothy as Paul's 'true-born son.'

60 A sentiment often expressed by Erasmus; for references see *Ratio* 569 with n419.

61 John 14:23

heads,[62] we tangle them, we distort them, just as if we were dealing with trivial matter? We shape the heavenly teachings to our way of life as if they were a Lydian rule;[63] and while we avoid by every means the appearance of ignorance and bring to this endeavour the whole range of secular learning, I will not say we destroy what is truly distinctive in the Christian philosophy, but it cannot be denied that we confine to a small number of people what Christ particularly wished to be available to all. The philosophy of Christ lies more in the inclinations and intentions of the heart than in syllogisms. It is a way of life rather than a form of argument. It is inspiration rather than erudition. It is transformation rather than argumentation. To be learned falls to the lot of very few, but no one is prevented from being a Christian, no one is prevented from being godly; and, I shall boldly add, no one is prevented from being a theologian.

Now whatever is in complete accord with nature sinks readily into the minds of all. And what else is the philosophy of Christ, which he himself calls a 'rebirth,' than the restoration of nature, which was created whole and sound?[64] So although no one has taught this philosophy more completely, more effectively than Christ, yet one may find many statements in the books of the pagans that agree with his doctrine.[65] There has never been a school of philosophy so crude as to teach that money makes a man happy; never one so shameless as to determine that our chief good is the attainment of commonplace honours and pleasures. The Stoics perceived that no one is wise unless he is good;[66] they perceived that nothing is truly good or honourable except true virtue,[67] that nothing is to be feared or is bad except only what is morally wrong.[68] In the works of Plato Socrates teaches in many ways that wrong is not to be repaid with wrong.[69] Also, that since the soul is immortal, one must not mourn for those who pass from this life to a happier one,

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62 Cf *Adagia* I v 72; literally, 'whatever has come into the mouth.'
63 Erasmus refers elsewhere to the 'Lydian' rule, eg *In psalmum 1* CWE 63 29 n124, but must mean the Lesbian rule (*Adagia* I v 93), a ruler used by masons and made of lead, which could be bent to fit the shape of any stone.
64 Cf John 3:3–7. The Latin for 'nature' (*natura*) and 'rebirth' (*renascentia*) is derived from the same root *-na-* 'to come into being, to be born.'
65 Cf *De philosophia evangelica* in 'Separate Latin Editions' 730; and for further references see Translator's Note 403 with n36.
66 On the Stoic concept of the wise man see Cicero *De finibus* 3.70, 71, 73–6.
67 Cf Cicero *De officiis* 3.33.
68 Cf Cicero *De officiis* 3.106.
69 Cf Plato *Crito* 49B.

confident of having lived life well.[70] Further, that the soul must be led by all possible means away from inclinations of the body and towards those things that truly exist although they are not seen.[71] Aristotle wrote in his *Politics* that nothing can be pleasurable to us that is not in some measure despised, virtue alone excepted.[72] Epicurus also says that nothing in life can be pleasant to a person unless he knows that his conscience is clear; and then true pleasure bubbles forth as from a spring of water.[73] What of the fact that numerous philosophers have presented much of this teaching, notably Socrates, Diogenes, and Epictetus? Yet since Christ has both taught and exemplified the same teaching so much more fully, is it not monstrous that it is ignored and neglected and even ridiculed by Christians? If there are doctrines that pertain more closely to Christianity than his, let us reject his and follow those. But if his alone are the doctrines that are able to make a person truly Christian, why do we treat them as almost more obsolete and invalid than the books of Moses? The first requirement is to know what Christ taught, the second is to do it. For I think that anyone should count himself a Christian not because he argues with a thorny, baffling tangle of words about instances, relativities, quiddities and formalities,[74] but rather because he observes and imitates what Christ taught and did.

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70 Cf Plato *Phaedo* 64A–67C, 114D–115A; also *De philosophia evangelica* in 'Separate Latin Editions' 731 with n16.

71 Cf 2 Cor 4:18. See Plato *Phaedo* 67A–C and 80A–B, where the Platonic doctrine of Ideas or Forms are set out. For the need to attain to the Ideas see *Republic* VI and VII. Cf *De philosophia evangelica* in 'Separate Latin Editions' 730–1 with n15.

72 An elusive reference, not satisfactorily identified; cf Holborn 145:21n. Douglas H. Parker cites Aristotle *Politics* VII, but the passage is not apposite; cf *William Roye's An exhortation to the diligent study of scripture AND An exposition in to the seventh chaptre of the pistle to the Corinthians* (Toronto 2000) 184 on lines 359–61. Closer to Erasmus' statement are passages in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, such as '... the good for man is an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue ...' (1098a), and particularly: 'If happiness is an activity in accordance with virtue, it is reasonable to assume that it is in accordance with the highest virtue ... it is the activity of [the divine part of our nature], in accordance with the virtue proper to it, that will be perfect happiness' (1177a); *The Ethics of Aristotle: The Nicomachean Ethics* trans J.A.K. Thomson, rev, annot, and appendices by Hugh Tredennick, introduction and bibliography by Jonathan Barnes, Penguin Classics (Baltimore 1953; repr 1976) 76 and 328.

73 Cf Cicero *De finibus* 1.52–4.

74 Technical terms of scholastic philosophy. The same list is given in Ep 858:92–4 (1518), the prefatory letter to the *Enchiridion*; cf CWE 66 10. According to Richard J. Schoeck: '... objections to scholastic terminology became a *topos* in the history

I do not condemn the work of those who have exercised their intellectual powers and achieved renown in subtle arguments of this kind, for I do not wish anyone to be offended; but I think, and unless I am mistaken I think correctly, that there is no richer source for the pure and genuine philosophy of Christ than the Gospels and the apostolic letters,[75] and if anyone applies himself to these studies with a pious mind, praying rather than disputing and desiring to be transformed rather than to be armed, he will undoubtedly discover that there is nothing that pertains to human happiness, nothing that pertains to any aspect of this life, which has not been taught, examined, and resolved in these writings. If we want to learn something, why does another authority please us more than Christ himself? If we are searching for a pattern of life, why do we give another model precedence over Christ himself, who is the archetype? If we desire a remedy against distressing passions of the mind, why do we suppose that we can find more immediate help elsewhere? If we wish to rouse a listless and languid mind by reading, where, I ask, will you find intellectual sparks so lively and effective? If it seems good to distract the mind from the troubles of this life, why are other pleasures more delightful? Why do we unhesitatingly prefer to learn the wisdom of Christ from the writings of human beings rather than from Christ himself, who in these books especially fulfils what he promised, that he would be with us always, 'even unto the end of the world';[76] for in them he lives even now, breathes and speaks to us, I might almost say more effectively than when he lived among men. The Jews saw less and heard less than you see and hear in the gospel writings, provided you bring eyes and ears by which he can be seen and heard.[77]

What kind of behaviour, I ask you, is this? We preserve the letters written by a dear friend, we admire them greatly, we carry them about, we read them over and over again; yet there are thousands and thousands of

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of renaissance humanism'; *Erasmus of Europe: The Making of a Humanist 1467–1500* (Edinburgh 1990) 180 n12. The *topos* appears abundantly in Erasmus' work; for further examples, with an explanation of the terms, see *Methodus* 438 with n55.

75 Cf Erasmus to Leo X, Ep 384:44–55 ('Prefaces and Letters' 769), and Ep 858:139–65 (CWE 66 11).

76 Matt 28:20

77 by which he can be seen and heard.] First in *1519*; in *1516*, 'by which they [the Gospels] can be seen and heard.' For the biblical echoes see 1 John 1:1 and 1 Pet 1:8; also Matt 13:16; Luke 10:23–4; and cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 39 with n181.

Christians who, although learned in other respects, have never even read the Gospels and Epistles in their whole life. Mohammedans uphold their doctrines. Jews even today study their Moses from the cradle. Why do we not do the same for Christ? Those who profess the Rule of Benedict learn, study, and master a rule written by a man, a fairly ordinary man, and for ordinary men.[78] Members of the Augustinian order[79] know the rule of their founder. Franciscans reverence the precious teachings of their Francis; they embrace them and take them with them into whatever part of the world they go; they do not believe they are safe unless the little book is near their hearts.[80] Why do the men of those orders accord more respect to a rule written by a man than Christians universally accord to their rule, which Christ gave to all, which all have professed equally at baptism,[81] and which is more holy than any other, even if you listed another six hundred such rules? Just as Paul wrote that the law of Moses lost its glory when compared to the glory of the gospel that succeeded it,[82] so I wish that the Gospels and the Epistles of the apostles would come to be regarded by all Christians as so holy that these other writings would not even appear to be holy in comparison with them. As far as I am concerned, others are free to show whatever respect they like to Albertus Magnus,[83] to Alexander, to Thomas, Aegidius, Richard, and Ockham, for I

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78 and for ordinary men.] Added in *1519*

79 Augustinian order] *Augustiniani ordinis* first in *1519*; in *1516*, *Augustinianae factionis* 'Augustinian party'

80 The 'little book' is the *Regula bullata* or Second Rule, written by St Francis, approved by Pope Honorius III in 1223, and 'still today the governing constitution of the Order of Friars Minor' (Craig Thompson in CWE 40 1028); cf the preface to the 'Latin-only edition' published by Cratander in 'Separate Latin Editions' 723 with n15. Erasmus owned a copy of the Rule (Thompson CWE 40 1016). Cf Allen Ep 2700:59–60 (1532): 'If only all [the Franciscans] would keep in their hearts the [Rule] they carry in their breast.'

81 Cf the letter to Paul Volz (1518), Ep 858:603–5: '... we shall not greatly feel the lack of those three vows which are man's invention [the monastic vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience] in someone who has kept in sincerity and purity that one great vow, which we took in our baptism not to man but to Christ.' Cf *De contemptu mundi* CWE 66 175: 'And do not think that you lack any vows if you have kept the vow you made to Christ in baptism. You need no Carmelite or Dominican cowl if you have kept unsullied the white gown given you at your baptism'; cf also ibidem n22 and the reference there to Ep 296:91–2.

82 Cf 2 Cor 3:7–9.

83 The theologians named in the following passage were all serious students of Aristotelian philosophy or of Peter Lombard's *Sententiae*, a work that became the standard textbook of Catholic theology after the book's orthodoxy

would not wish to diminish the glory of anyone or to contend with studies now well established. However learned the works of those men may be, however 'subtle,' and, if it please them, however 'seraphic,'[84] it must still be admitted that the Gospels and Epistles are the supreme authority. Paul wants the spirits of the prophets to be judged whether they are from God.[85] Augustine, who read critically all the works of all the authors, asks no greater respect for his own works.[86] In the Gospels and Epistles alone I venerate

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was established in 1215 at the Fourth Lateran Council. To each a characterizing epithet became attached. Identification of each is here very brief and based on ODCC, where further details may be found. On Peter Lombard see *Ratio* 682 with n1015.

**Albertus Magnus** (*doctor universalis*, c 1200–80), a German Dominican, wrote paraphrases of most of Aristotle's works. **Alexander of Hales** (*doctor irrefragabilis*, c 1186–1245), an English Franciscan, lectured in theology at Paris. 'He took the fateful step' of substituting the *Sententiae* of Peter Lombard for the Bible as the basic text of his lectures on theology. **Thomas Aquinas** (*doctor angelicus*, c 1225–74), an Italian Dominican, was a pupil of Albertus Magnus, from whom he acquired the interest in Aristotle that shaped his theology and culminated in the *Summa theologiae*. **Aegidius (Giles) of Rome** (*doctor fundatissimus*, c 1245–1316), an Italian Augustinian, studied under Thomas Aquinas in Paris and wrote commentaries on some of the works of Aristotle and on Peter Lombard's *Sententiae*. **Richard of Middleton** (*doctor solidus*, c 1249–?), a Franciscan of English or French origin, was influenced by the work of Thomas Aquinas and composed a commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sententiae*. **William of Ockham** (*doctor invincibilis*, c 1285–1347), an English Franciscan, taught at Oxford and wrote commentaries on Aristotle's *Organon* and Peter Lombard's *Sententiae*.

84 'Subtle' refers to **Duns Scotus** (*doctor subtilis*, c 1266–1308), a Scottish Franciscan. He lectured on the *Sententiae* of Peter Lombard at Cambridge, Oxford, and Paris and wrote a commentary on them. His work, strongly influenced by Aristotelianism, was accepted by the Franciscans as the basis of their theology. 'Seraphic' refers to **Bonaventure** (*doctor seraphicus*, c 1217–74), an Italian Franciscan. He studied theology under Alexander of Hales but was less attracted to Aristotelian philosophy than many of his contemporaries. He became minister general of his order and wrote an extensive commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sententiae*.

85 Paul speaks of the discernment of spirits and of the spirits of the prophets as subject to prophets (1 Cor 12:10 and 14:32), but the clause here echoes also 1 John 4:1: 'Test the Spirits whether they are from God' (NRSV).

86 Augustine did not claim that his works were authoritative; rather, they were works in progress, in the writing of which he accepted God's guidance; cf *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* 11.5. His *Retractationes* demonstrated his recognition of the need for revision in his work.

even what I do not understand. Not a school of theologians, but the heavenly Father himself has approved this author for us by the testimony of his divine voice and has done so on two occasions, first at his baptism in Jordan[87] and then at his transfiguration on Mount Tabor.[88] 'This,' he said, 'is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.'[89] Here is a 'sound'[90] authority, and, to use their word, a truly 'unshakeable'[91] one. What is the meaning of 'Hear ye him'? It is, 'This is the one and only Doctor.[92] Be ye disciples of him alone.' Each man may honour his own authority in his studies as much as he wishes, but this statement was made of one alone without exception, of Christ. On him first the dove descended in confirmation of his Father's testimony.[93] It is his spirit that Peter reflects most closely, to whom that great shepherd committed his sheep once, twice, and a third time to be fed, fed without doubt on the food of the teaching of Christ.[94] It was Christ who was born again, as it were, in Paul, whom he called a chosen instrument and illustrious herald of his name.[95] John set down in his writings what he had learned from the sacred fountain of his breast.[96] What, I ask you, is like this in Scotus? (I would not wish this to be taken as an insult.) What is like this in Thomas?[97] Indeed I marvel at the ability of the former and even reverence

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87 Cf Matt 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21–2.

88 Cf Matt 17:1–9; Mark 9:1–8; Luke 9:28–36. Mount Tabor, a hill on the plain of Esdraelon that separates Galilee from Samaria, is not named in the New Testament as the scene of the Transfiguration, but the tradition is early and was known to Origen; cf CWE 44 114 n24.

89 Matt 17:5

90 'Sound': *solidus*, with reference to Richard of Middleton, *doctor solidus*; cf n83 above.

91 'Unshakeable': *irrefragabilis*, with reference to Alexander of Hales, *doctor irrefragabilis*; cf n83.

92 Ie the truly learned teacher

93 Cf Matt 3:16.

94 Cf John 21:15–17 and the paraphrase on those verses, CWE 46 223–4, where Peter is designated as the one who will 'take this model of a good shepherd from [Christ].' In the *Paraphrase on Acts* Erasmus portrays Peter as fulfilling the model established in Christ; for vivid examples of Peter as the good shepherd see CWE 50 10–12, 17, 68, 76, 81–2.

95 Cf Acts 9:15.

96 Cf John 13:25 and 21:20; also 1 John 1:1–3.

97 The slight qualification (suggesting respect, even appreciation) in the evaluation of Duns Scotus here is perhaps unexpected, as it is unusual in Erasmus' New Testament scholarship. For Erasmus' ambiguous view of Thomas Aquinas see 'New Testament Scholarship' 80–1 (1516), 209 with n809 (1522), and 312 (1527); also *Methodus* 431 with n29.

the sanctity of the latter. Why do we not all learn our philosophy from the writings of those incomparable authorities, the Gospels and Epistles? Why do we not carry these books near our hearts, have these books always in our hands?[98] Why do we not hunt through these books, examine and discuss them constantly? Why devote a greater part of life to Averroës than to the Gospels? Why spend almost all our allotted time on the decisions of mortal men and on contradictory opinions? I grant, if you like, that these books[99] are the works of sublime theologians; but let us be sure that the basic training of the great theologian of the future is by way of the Gospels and Epistles.

May all of us who swore allegiance to Christ at baptism, if indeed we made the vow sincerely, be filled with the teaching of Christ early amid the embraces of our parents and the caresses of our nurses, for whatever the little unglazed storage pot of the mind first soaks up[100] penetrates most deeply and adheres most tenaciously. Let the first halting word be 'Christ,' let earliest infancy be formed by his Gospels; and above all may Christ be taught in such a way that he is loved even by children. For just[101] as the severity of certain teachers causes children to hate reading while they are still learning to read, so there are teachers who make the philosophy of Christ disagreeable and tedious, although nothing is more sweet. Let the children, then, be occupied in these studies until they grow imperceptibly to strong manhood in Christ. The writings of others are such that many have regretted the effort spent on them; and it often happens that those who have battled right up to the approach of death in defence of the tenets of their philosophers withdraw

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98 Cf 418 n80 above and M*ethodus* 448 with n109. For the Gospels and Epistles as sufficient in themselves see *Methodus* 448 with n110.

99 Eg commentaries on Aristotle and Peter Lombard's *Sententiae*

100 'The little unglazed storage pot of the mind ... soaks up': *rudis illa animi testula combiberit. Testula*, a diminutive of *testa* 'storage pot,' late Latin and vulgar slang for 'head' (cf French *tête*, Italian *testa*); *rudis* 'uncultivated,' of pottery 'unglazed.' As unglazed pottery 'soaks up' (*combiberit*) liquids, so the young mind 'soaks up' ('imbibes') whatever information comes its way – a fundamental principle in Erasmus' educational theory, expressed elaborately in the *De pueris instituendis* CWE 26; cf especially CWE 26 305–6, noting the images (wax, clay, jar) and the reference to *Adagia* II iv 20. Cf also the preface to the *Paraphrase on Matthew*: '… right from the cradle children will … as much as is possible, drink in the teaching of Christ just as eagerly in private as in public' CWE 45 21.

101 For just ... more sweet.] Added in *1522*

from the school of their master at the very hour of death. But happy is that man whom death catches while he is meditating on the gospel of Christ.[102]

Therefore, let us all desire these books eagerly;[103] let us embrace them; let us live with them constantly; let us admire them greatly; let us die in them; let us be transformed into them, since 'our preoccupations affect our character.'[104] Whoever cannot pursue this course – but who cannot if only he so desires? – let him at least honour those writings as the repository of the divine mind. If someone exhibited a print made by the feet of Christ, how we Christians would prostrate ourselves, how we would adore! Why, then, do we not rather venerate his living and breathing image, preserved in these books? If someone displayed the tunic of Christ, would we not fly to the ends of the earth to kiss it?[105] But even if you were to produce every possession he owned, there is nothing that would show Christ more clearly and more truly than the written Gospels. Through our love of Christ we enrich a statue of wood or stone with jewels and gold. Why do we not rather adorn these books with gold and jewels and anything more precious,[106] for they recall Christ to us more vividly than any little statue. A statue shows only the appearance of his body – if indeed it shows anything of that – but these books show you the living image of his holy mind and Christ himself, speaking, healing, dying, rising to life again. In short, they restore Christ to us so completely and so vividly that you would see him less clearly should you behold him standing before your very eyes.[107]

The End of the *Paraclesis*

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102 See the description of the death of Cornelius in the colloquy 'The Funeral' CWE 40 777–9.

103 Cf Thomas à Kempis *De imitatione Christi* 1.1.3: 'Therefore let us devote ourselves fully to meditation upon the life of Jesus.'

104 Cf Ovid's poem 'Sappho to Phaon' *Heroides* 15.83: *abeunt studia in mores*.

105 Such relics as the 'seamless coat of Jesus' at Trier and the Turin shroud (traditions dating from the twelfth and fourteenth centuries respectively) were undoubtedly known to Erasmus. For a similar expression contrasting the veneration of the saints with the adoration of the living image of Christ and his apostles as found in the Scriptures see *Enchiridion* CWE 66 72–3.

106 Cf the description of liturgical Bibles in Ep 1333:221–2: 'The text in use is beautifully decorated with gold and ivory and precious stones.' For his third edition of the New Testament, Erasmus himself had available the *codex aureus*, a text of the Gospels transcribed in gold letters; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 192 with n745.

107 Cf *Explanatio symboli* CWE 70 240: ' ... Christ whom the gospel account places before our eyes, as if in a theatre.'

# THE *METHODUS* OF ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM

*Erasmi Roterodami methodus*

translated and annotated by
ROBERT D. SIDER

# THE *METHODUS*[1] OF ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM

But perhaps some reader will say to me, 'Why do you urge me on when I am already hastening' – to use an expression.[2] 'Point out rather the way and the manner in which anyone at all can arrive by a short cut, as it were, at that philosophy you so greatly praise. For not the least part of a task is to know how to set about it.'[3] In truth, I well know that this, in the first place, is certainly not the work of a single volume, and in the second place, not in fact a task for me. Still, since those who have themselves suffered shipwreck are nevertheless accustomed to have regard for others who set sail, pointing out to them the dangers, I shall imitate these, no doubt, or imitate, at least, those statues of Mercury that are placed at crossroads, and by their direction from time to time conduct the traveller forward to a place where they themselves will never arrive.[4] To quote a line or two from the poets, 'I shall do the work of a flintstone, which, though itself incapable of cutting, can sharpen a sword.'[5]

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1 For the term *methodus* see the annotation on Eph 6:11 (*adversus insidias*), where Erasmus defines *μέθοδος* by distinguishing it from *μεθοδεία*, the former a system (or plan) for approaching a subject, the latter a plan for approaching a subject with intent to deceive. Cf also *Ratio* n1. For the *Methodus* as a preface to the *Novum instrumentum* see 'New Testament Scholarship' 38, 40–1; and for its relation to the *Ratio* see the Translator's Note to *Ratio* 482.

2 Cf *Adagia* I ii 47 'To spur on the running horse,' an adage Erasmus frequently recalls; cf eg Ep 177:57 and the paraphrase on 1 Tim 1:9 CWE 44 9 with n25. Cf the annotation on Rom 15:14 ('so that you might be able [to warn] each other'), where Erasmus cites Homer *Iliad* 8.293–4 for the expression, 'Why do you urge me on when I am hastening even of my own accord'; cf CWE 56 402 with n11.

3 Cf Ep 540:65–6: 'With men of outstanding ability, even to have shown them the way is often a very great step forward.' 'Philosophy you so greatly praise': a reference to the 'philosophy of Christ' advocated in the *Paraclesis*.

4 In antiquity, busts of Mercury in a form with either two or four heads were placed at crossroads to mark out the roads and establish boundaries; cf *Dictionnaire des mythologies et des religions des sociétés traditionelles et du monde antique* under the direction of Yves Bonnefoy, 2 vols (Paris 1981) I 500. For the three-headed Mercury see *Adagia* III vii 95. The image of the shipwreck apparently conveys a hint, explicit elsewhere, of Erasmus' contempt for his own theological education; cf eg Ep 64.

5 Cf Horace *Ars poetica* 304–5.

Now it is true that St Aurelius Augustine, in the four books to which he gave the title *On Christian Doctrine*,[6] has discussed this question both fully and with exacting care; all the more reason why I shall treat this subject not only with the utmost brevity but also in a plainer and less elegant fashion – with a fatter Minerva,[7] as they say – for I am not, in fact, preparing this for distinguished persons, but am striving with such industry as I have to bring help to ordinary intellects of a lower order.

Accordingly, what should have straightaway and in the very first place been taught is extremely easy and can be told, as those no doubt say, like one, two, three,[8] but in its effect it is by far the first and greatest thing of all; and just as it requires only the slightest effort to teach, so it takes an enormous effort to manifest in practice – I mean, of course, that to this philosophy, which is neither Stoic nor Aristotelian but entirely of heaven, we bring a mind worthy of it, one that is not only free from all the stains of sins but also at peace and rest from every tumult of the passions, so that the image of that eternal truth may be reflected more distinctly in us, as in a peaceful river or a smooth-surfaced mirror.[9] For if Hippocrates requires of his followers

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6 I give the English title commonly adopted. But for *doctrina* here in the sense of 'teaching' see Augustine *De doctrina christiana* ed and trans R.P.H. Green (Oxford 1995) ix–x. On the treatise itself see Fitzgerald *Augustine* 278–80, where it is suggested that the work is best designated by the title 'On the Form of Teaching Suitable for Christians,' and where the composition of the work is assigned to two periods, early (mid-390s, books 1–3.25.35) and late (the remainder, 420s, when Augustine was writing the *Retractationes*); for Augustine's advocacy of Greek as part of a late revision see *Ratio* 647 with n830. Cf also Fitzgerald *Augustine* 312–15, where it is shown that Erasmus knew the *De doctrina christiana* well from an early point in his career. For an evaluation of its influence in his works see Charles Béné *Érasme et Saint Augustin: ou, l'influence de Saint Augustin sur l'humanisme d'Érasme* (Geneva 1969) passim (cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 7 with n23).

7 For the image see *Adagia* I i 37, 38.

8 For the expression see *Adagia* III vii 58 'You talk like 1, 2, 3.' 'Those' may refer to the 'distinguished persons' just mentioned or to instructors more generally.

9 On purity of mind and tranquillity of heart as prerequisites for the mediation of divine truth see *Enchiridion* CWE 66 34, *In psalmum 1* CWE 63 8, and the paraphrases on Acts 1:14 and 8:22 CWE 50 10 and 60. Even in his debate with Lefèvre Erasmus pled for a right mind 'free from the din of passion' in approaching Scripture; cf *Apologia ad Fabrum* CWE 83 6; see also n12 below. On Erasmus' interest in the proper approach to learning see *De ratione studii* CWE 24 666:1–19 with n6.

a blameless and holy character,[10] if Julius Firmicus in the superstitious art does not admit a heart and mind corrupted by the love of gain or glory,[11] how much more is it right for us to approach the school – or, more truly, the temple – of this divine wisdom with minds completely cleansed.

Let there be in you a most ardent desire for learning. This incomparable pearl does not deign either to be loved in any ordinary way or to be cherished along with others. It demands a thirsting soul and a soul thirsting for nothing else.[12] Let all arrogance now be far away[13] from those about to approach this sacred threshold; far away the appetite for glory, that plague most pernicious to the truth; far away obstinacy, the breeder of brawls; and even more, blind temerity. When you enter places that are to be venerated with religious devotion, you fondly kiss everything, you reverence everything, and as though some divine power is everywhere present, you treat everything with reli-

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10 The precise dates for the life of Hippocrates of Cos are uncertain, but he was probably a contemporary of Socrates (469–399 BC) – Plato knows him as a teacher of medicine (*Protagoras* 311B). Hippocrates may well have authored medical works, though the Hippocratic corpus has been described as a 'library or rather the remains of a library'; W.H.S. Jones *Hippocrates* Loeb Classical Library (London 1938) I xxix. The allusion here is probably to the Hippocratic oath, which required that the physician be 'pure and holy' (ibidem 298). For other allusions to the oath see *Encomium medicinae* CWE 29 49 and Erasmus' annotation on 'Hippocrates' in his edition of Jerome's 'Letter to Nepotian' CWE 61 151, where he observes, 'This oath of Hippocrates is in medical books and is too well known to require a reference here.' The Hippocratic Collection in Latin translation was not published until 1525.

11 Julius Firmicus Maternus (C AD 300–after 360), probably a Sicilian, wrote a book on astrology, the *Mathesis*, between the end of 334 and the beginning of 337 while still a pagan; but after his conversion to Christianity, he wrote (between 343–50) *De errore profanarum religionum* '*On the Error of the Pagan Religions*,' in which he called for the eradication of paganism. In the *Mathesis* he claims that the soul, when freed from its vices and lustful passions, is able to grasp the knowledge of divine things (1.4.3), and he urges that the secrets of divine truth be told only to those whose hands and minds are clean and pure (7.1.2–3). 'The superstitious art' is probably a reference to astrology.

12 For the images see Matt 13:46 (pearl); Pss 42:2, 63:1, 143:6 (thirsty soul). On desire as a precondition of learning see the paraphrase on Acts 8:31 CWE 50 61.

13 'Be far away': *procul absit*, a traditional formula used to keep the uninitiated at a distance from holy things; cf eg Virgil *Aeneid* 6.258–9; also the paraphrase on Acts 5:13 CWE 50 41 with n23, *In psalmum 85* CWE 64 17, and *Adagia* III v 18. The sentence with its allusion to 'arrogance,' 'glory,' 'obstinacy' is apparently intended to make an implicit reference to the character of those who indulge in the current scholastic debates; cf n18 below.

gious awe. Remember that you must do this much more scrupulously when you are about to enter this sanctuary of the Divine Spirit. What is granted to you to see, fall down before it and kiss it; what is not granted to see – this, though concealed, worship nevertheless from afar and venerate, whatever it is. Let ungodly curiosity be absent.[14] You will deserve to see certain mysteries[15] perhaps for this very reason, that in reverence you withdraw yourself from their sight. Let this be your first and only goal, this your prayer, attend to this alone: that you be changed, be swept away,[16] be inspired, be transformed into what you are learning. The food of the soul is useful not if it remains in the memory as in the stomach, but only if it penetrates into the very

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14 Erasmus frequently makes a critique of *curiositas*. See ASD IX-2 258 526n (SV *curiosis*); also CWE 50 8n38. A comparison between 'devout curiosity' and 'human curiosity' appears early in the *De philosophia evangelica*; cf 'Separate Latin Editions' 730 with n10; cf also Erasmus' later attempt to distinguish between 'curious investigation' and 'ratiocination' in responding to the Spanish monks, 'New Testament Scholarship' 283 with n1198. For the elaboration of the many questions *curiositas* seeks to answer see the annotation on 1 Tim 1:6 (*in vaniloquium*), the critique of the theologians in *Moria* CWE 27 126–7, *Ratio* 698–708, and the dedicatory letter for Erasmus' edition of Hilary, Ep 1334:147–249 – a critique later attacked by the Paris theologians; cf CWE 82 250–4.

15 In his *Annotations* Erasmus repeatedly notes that the Greek word *μυστήριον* 'mystery' has the sense of 'something hidden,' which Erasmus expresses most frequently by the Latin *arcanum* or *secretum*, and he indicates that the *mysterion* is to be shared only with the 'initiates,' never with the profane; cf eg the annotations on Mark 4:11 (*mysterium regni*) and on Rom 11:25 ('brothers this mystery'); the paraphrases on 1 Cor 7:12 CWE 43 93 with n30 and on Col 1:27 CWE 43 406 with n48, and the reference there to Georges Chantraine, who attributes to Paul a creative role in establishing this sense of the word.

16 Already in the *Enchiridion* (1503) Erasmus had described in very similar terms the proper approach to the study of Scripture; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 16. Likewise, Edward Lee described (1520) the proper preparation for biblical study with virtually the same images as Erasmus has used here, but implying, according to Erasmus, that Erasmus himself lacked the essential preparation! Cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei* 2 (Note 209) CWE 72 315–16. For *rapio*, here 'swept away,' connoting a powerful spiritual experience see CWE 42 46 n9 and CWE 50 15 n22, 77 n12, and 131 n19; also the paraphrase on John 3:8 ('mortal minds are seized [*rapiantur*] and transformed by the Spirit of God') CWE 46 46; and *Enchiridion* CWE 66 34: 'You will feel inspired, swept away, transfigured in an ineffable manner by the divine power.' The word is used in both VG and ER 2 Cor 12:2 and 4, which speak of the man 'caught up' into the third heaven. Cf CWE 45 121 n40. Erasmus admitted to Latomus that 'rapture' alone does not make a theologian; cf *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* CWE 71 61–2 and 55–6.

affections[17] and into the very viscera of the mind. You may suppose that you have made progress not if you debate more keenly,[18] but only if you sense that you are becoming a different person: less proud, less irascible, less fond of life, if every day some vice disappears, some growth in godliness occurs.

Now in regard to that literature by whose support we more easily attain this, our first concern should be to learn well the three languages – Latin, Greek, and Hebrew – since it is clear that all of mystic[19] Scripture has been handed down in these. And do not, dear reader, I pray you, here forthwith recoil, beaten back as though with a club by the difficulty of the task. If you have a teacher, if you have the intent, these three languages will be learned with almost less trouble than one learns the pitiful stammering of a single half language today[20] – no doubt because of the ignorance of the teachers. Indeed, we do not demand that you advance in these studies to prodigious fluency; it is enough if you get as far as neatness and propriety of expression, that is, if you achieve some modest skill such as suffices for making judgments.[21] For, to pass over all the other disciplines of humane learning, it is in no way possible to understand what is written if you are ignorant of the language in which it is written. We must not, I think, listen to those persons who, though

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17 'Affections': *affectus*, an important word in the Erasmian psychology; see the annotation on Rom 8:7 ('because the wisdom of the flesh') for Erasmus' discussion of the word in response to the criticism of Frans Titelmans, a discussion that is found greatly extended in Ep 2260:135–326; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 325 with n1379. Erasmus elsewhere indulges the image of the 'food of the soul' – vividly and at length in *In psalmum 22* CWE 64 183–5; cf the paraphrase on John 6:34–5 CWE 46 82–3.

18 A reference to the 'disputations' that were a regular part of scholastic education. For disputations in medieval universities see *A History of the University in Europe* ed Hilde de Ridder-Symoens, 4 vols (Cambridge 1992) I 326–8, 418–20, and 419 n33.

19 'Mystic,' a word Erasmus often applies to Scripture but sometimes also to the Eucharist; cf CWE 43 72 n12, 129 n7, 457 n18; CWE 44 23 n15; and CWE 50 22 n84.

20 'The stammering of a half language' probably refers to the language of the scholastic theologians whose speech Erasmus elsewhere described as stammering; cf *Moria* CWE 27 130 and *Vita Hieronymi* CWE 61 53. In the *De recta pronuntiatione* (CWE 26 390) Erasmus in the persona of Bear describes the vernacular languages derived from Latin as 'barbarian.' Erasmus' critics were quick to object to the optimism expressed here both in regard to the ease with which Greek can be learned and in regard to its value; cf *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* CWE 71 43–4.

21 On the principle advocated here that a modest knowledge of Greek suffices for the biblical interpreter see Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 2.39.58–42.63.

they waste away in sophistical trumpery even to a decrepit old age, are accustomed to say, 'Jerome's translation is enough for me!' as those chiefly reply who do not care to know even Latin, so that for them, certainly, Jerome translated in vain.[22] But to disregard for the moment the fact that it matters very much whether you draw from the originating springs of Scripture or from any sort of pool whatever, what of the fact that certain things, because of idioms peculiar to the languages, cannot even be transferred to a foreign language without losing their original clarity, their native grace, their special nuance?[23] What of the fact that some things are too small to be translated at all, as St Jerome everywhere cries out and complains?[24] What of the fact that many things restored by Jerome have perished due to the ravages of time – for example, the Gospels emended according to the Greek original? What of the fact that, either through the error or the indiscretion of the scribes, books were long ago corrupted and today at many points are being corrupted?[25] Finally, what of the fact that not even those comments through which Jerome restored these texts[26] are well understood if you are completely ignorant of the languages on whose evidence he depends?

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22 Clearly an attitude widely extended; cf the preface (1516) to the Jerome edition II 1, where Erasmus refers to 'the man who finds Jerome alone acceptable' CWE 61 70; and Erasmus' response (Ep 337:835 [1515]) to Maarten van Dorp's relatively enlightened criticism of Erasmus' attempt to 'correct Jerome,' Ep 304:101–31.

23 For this general critique of translations see Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 2.13.19. The comments here, repeated in the *Ratio*, brought objections from critics; cf *Ratio* 498 with n45. The contrasting images of spring and pool are very common in Erasmus' New Testament scholarship; cf eg Epp 373:175–9 and 384:51–5 ('Prefaces and Letters' 789 and 769–70), *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* CWE 71 39 and 50, and the preface to the Cratander edition (1520) of the separate Latin New Testament, 'Separate Latin Editions' 722 with n11. These images had been set in contrast by Jerome; cf eg the preface to the Psalms, Weber 767. Erasmus notes the 'native grace' and the 'special nuances' of the original language in *Contra morosos* paragraph 68; and cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 68 with n277.

24 See eg the preface to Jerome's translation of Eusebius' *Chronicon*, *Interpretatio Chronicae Eusebii Pamphili* PL 27 33–7.

25 Cf Jerome in the *Praefatio* to the Gospels: 'Why do we not return to the Greek original to change or correct the mistakes of incompetent translators, unskilled meddlers, and sleepy scribes'; Weber 1515.

26 'Comments' and 'these texts' render the indefinite pronouns *ea* and *haec*. In the corresponding passage in the *Ratio* the text reads *ea commentaria … ea*, translated 'those annotations … these texts'; cf *Ratio* 499.

But if Jerome's translation[27] sufficed once and for all, whatever was the point of assuring through pontifical decrees that the true reading of the Old Testament be sought in the Hebrew books, and an accurate text of the New in the Greek sources?[28] Jerome had certainly translated by then! Lastly, if this translation was sufficient, how did it happen afterwards that theologians of the first rank slipped as a result of so many manifest and shameful errors, which is so obvious that it can be neither denied nor concealed? Among these is Thomas Aquinas himself, the most assiduous of all the moderns – and let

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27 For most of Erasmus' contemporary readers 'Jerome's translation' would mean the Vulgate Bible. But Erasmus insisted that the Vulgate Bibles in circulation could not, strictly speaking, be Jerome's translation, since in his commentaries Jerome himself (c 347–420) is found correcting translations that became enshrined in the Vulgate Bible, while Vulgate Bibles of the sixteenth century manifestly differed among themselves. Later in his life, Jerome translated from the Hebrew the books of the Old Testament universally accepted as canonical (though one of his versions of the Psalms was a revision of the Vulgate based on the Septuagint, another was based on the Septuagint corrected against the Hebrew of Origen's *Hexapla*); he translated also several books regarded by some as apocryphal. Earlier, at the request of Damasus, bishop of Rome (366–84) he edited (382–3) the older 'European' Latin translations of the Gospels, but the translations of the Acts, the Epistles, and Revelation, as these passed into the Vulgate, are not the work of Jerome. The older translations circulated along with Jerome's until the Carolingian period, when a single Bible comprised of the translations of both Jerome and of the older translators (of Acts, the Epistles, and Revelation) acquired authority. This Bible itself, however, experienced some development after the Carolingian period: in the early thirteenth century, the 'Paris Bible' gained a place of distinction and became the Bible printed by Gutenberg c 1453. Thus, while the Vulgate Bibles of the sixteenth century included versions of Jerome's translation, 'Jerome's translation' and the Vulgate Bible are not synonymous. Hence also Erasmus could say, as here, that many things in the Gospels emended by Jerome had perished. See CHB I 510–32.

28 Cf Ep 182:191–4 (the preface to Erasmus' edition of Valla's *Annotationes* [Paris: Josse Bade 1505]), where Erasmus cites the decree from Gratian *Decretum* pars 1 dist 9 (Ep 182:193n). 'Testament' translates *instrumentum*. The title page of Erasmus' first edition designated the New Testament by the phrase *Novum instrumentum*. The term was not well accepted, and subsequent editions bore the familiar title *Novum Testamentum*. For the criticism of *instrumentum* and for Erasmus' rationale for using the word see Ep 1858:556–73 (1527) and Erasmus' *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* CWE 84 56–7 (1529). In fact, *instrumentum* is found throughout the *Methodus* and frequently in the *Ratio* for the Old Testament, whereas the New Testament is characteristically designated *Novum Testamentum* in both. See 'Title Page of the *Novum instrumentum* 1516' 743 with n1.

his curse be upon me if I lie or say this as an insult; not to say a thing for the moment about the rest, who, in my opinion, at least, are not to be compared with Thomas.[29]

If anyone has already grown too old for this, let him play the part of a prudent man, be content with his lot, and as far as possible rely on the industry of others, provided he does not obstruct the young for whom this is especially written. And yet I, certainly, would not be the cause of despair even to the old, since I can name four men specifically, personally well known to me and also distinguished by their books already published, who came to the study of Greek, none of them under the age of forty, and one forty-eight. Moreover, they themselves by their own work have borne witness to the mastery they have achieved.[30] If Cato's example means little to us,[31] St Augustine himself, already a bishop, already an old man, returned to Greek,

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29 For the distinction between the moderns (*neoterici*) and the ancients (*vetustiores*) see CWE 56 10 with n7 and *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* CWE 71 74 #87; for a fairly balanced view of Thomas expressed in *1516* see 'New Testament Scholarship' 80–1 and *Paraclesis* n97. For a somewhat disdainful list of the lapses and shameful errors of theologians great and small see *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 775F–776C; see also *Apologia* 473 with n91, and in 'Errors in the Vulgate' see both 'Solecisms' #41 882 with n20 and the full title of 'Obscure Passages' 885.

30 The identity of these four is uncertain. However, Erasmus' correspondence points to an active interest among older men in learning Greek. In 1516 both John Colet, 'old man as he is,' and John Fisher were attempting to learn Greek; for Colet see Ep 471:30–2; for Fisher's difficulties see Epp 520:94–158, 540:21–87, and 592:18–24. John B. Gleason argues that Colet's effort was unsuccessful; *John Colet* (Berkeley 1989) 58–9. In 1517 Johann Rudolf von Hallwyl, 'being already past fifty-five,' was learning Greek (Ep 556:21–5 and cf Ep 561:65–7). By 21 December of the same year Robert de Keysere, born before 1480 (CEBR II 258), had 'achieved much in Greek,' Ep 743:7. Erasmus met Antonius Clava in 1514 and after Clava's death claimed that he had 'learned Greek when he was already an old man,' Ep 2260:51–3. In 1526 Jan Oem van Wijngaarden wrote to Erasmus that his father Floris, a critic of Erasmus, had taken up Greek at the age of fifty-five, Ep 1668:14–15.

31 For the tradition that the elder Cato took up the study of Greek in old age see Cicero *Cato maior*, *De senectute* 8.26, and *Academica* 2.2.5; also Plutarch *Cato* 2.4 (though in 12.4 Plutarch indicates that Cato knew Greek when he was in Athens but refused to use it out of contempt for those who were enamoured of things Greek). Cf Ep 373:133–5 ('Prefaces and Letters' 787 with n29); also *De pueris instituendis* CWE 26 321, where Erasmus refers to Cato's study of Greek.

which as a boy he had indeed tasted – and loathed.[32] Rodolphus Agricola, the singular light and ornament of our Germany, although he was a great connoisseur of letters was not ashamed to learn Hebrew when he was already past his fortieth year – and he did not despair at his great age, for as a youth he had imbibed Greek.[33] I myself am in my forty-ninth year, and when I can, I come back to Hebrew, with which I made some acquaintance long ago.[34]

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32 Augustine refers to his dislike of Greek as a schoolboy in *Confessions* 1.13.20. Peter Brown notes that it was only after 420 (in the last decade of his life), when he undertook to confront the Pelagian Julius of Eclanum, that Augustine attempted a comparison of a few texts in the original Greek with their translations; *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley 1967) 271. Erasmus observed that Augustine's knowledge of Greek was not an entirely satisfactory achievement of his later life; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 79 with nn313, 314 and the annotation on Rom 14:5 ('for one judges'), where Erasmus criticizes Augustine's lack of Greek evident in the relatively early (AD 394/395) *Expositio quarundam propositionum ex epistola ad Romanos.* Cf also 425 n6 above, Ep 337:726–9, and *Ratio* 647 with n830.

33 Rodolphus Agricola (1444–85) was born near Groningen in the Netherlands and took degrees from the Universities of Erfurt (BA) and Cologne (MA). From 1469 until 1479 he spent much of his time in Italy, where he translated many works from Greek into Latin. After his return to northern Europe, he vigorously advocated humanistic studies, first at Groningen, then at Heidelburg, where he had joined Johann von Dalberg, bishop of Worms, and where he began the study of Hebrew in 1484. In *Adagia* I iv 39 Erasmus gives a short account of Agricola, regarding him as 'most worthy of the highest public honour' and boasting that 'among the Greeks he was the best Greek of them all, and among the Latins the best Latin.' Cf CEBR I 15–17.

34 Erasmus was born on the night of 27–8 October in Rotterdam and celebrated his birthday on 28 October; cf *Compendium vitae* CWE 4 403:4n. The year of his birth, however, is disputed: see *Compendium vitae* CWE 4 403:4–5n, Ep 531:410n and 416–18, and Ep 548:5n. For a summary of the scholarship on the question with a convincing case made for 1466 as the year of Erasmus' birth see Harry Vredefeld 'The Ages of Erasmus and the Year of his Birth' *Renaissance Quarterly* 46 (1993) 754–809. Central to Vredeveld's argument is the claim that when speaking of age before 1517, Erasmus used the Latin ordinal as a cardinal numeral, but after 1516 he used it as an ordinal numeral. Thus, here in the *Methodus* (published in February 1516) the 'forty-ninth year' means that Erasmus had turned forty-nine in the preceding October, but at the equivalent point in the *Ratio* the 'fifty-third year' means that he had turned fifty-two just before its publication in November 1518; cf especially *Ratio* 500 with n52. Erasmus began the study of Hebrew sometime after his return to Paris in February 1500, but in 1504 he told John Colet that he had stopped working on Hebrew, 'put off by the strangeness of the language ... the shortness of life, and the limitations of human nature';

There is nothing the human mind cannot achieve provided it has learned self-discipline, and provided it greatly desires something. For this task, as I said, some modest ability is enough, provided, of course, that it is free from temerity, which generally pronounces an opinion more boldly precisely to the degree that its judgment is less discerning. In this respect, youth is indeed more fortunate, but we must not despair of the elderly.[35] The former offers in itself more hope, but to the latter intensity of desire sometimes furnishes what the strength of youth does not provide for others. Moreover, in his letters, Jerome himself sufficiently refutes the opinion of Hilary and Augustine, who think that nothing beyond the Septuagint is to be required for the books of the Old Testament, and if he had not refuted their opinion, Hilary's egregious mistake in the 'Hosanna' quite adequately does refute it. Ambrose, too, stumbled over the same stone.[36]

Further, if some rare native felicity – some 'exceptional natural gift'[37] as we say – seems to give promise of a distinguished theologian, I am not

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cf Ep 181:41–5. Johannes Oecolampadius was given responsibility for the Hebrew citations particularly frequent in the 1516 edition of the *Annotations* that accompanied his New Testament, since Erasmus had 'not yet made enough progress in Hebrew'; cf Ep 373:72–83 ('Prefaces and Letters' 785 with n14) and the letter of Oecolampadius in 'Prefaces and Letters' 776 with n14.

35 Cf *De pueris instituendis* CWE 26 319: 'Seneca says that no age is too old for learning.'

36 In his *Tractatus in psalmum* 118.6 (on Ps 119:28), *Littera* IV 6 Hilary finds two alternative readings for the Greek of the Septuagint and warns that 'it is not prudent to digress from the translation of the Seventy.' Augustine frequently affirms the authority of the Septuagint (cf *Ratio* n50) and in Ep 71.4 sets out for Jerome the reasons why it is preferable to translate from it rather than from the Hebrew. Indeed, Erasmus himself at times expressed a preference for the Septuagint over the Hebrew, as his correspondence with Agostino Steuco confirms; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 344 with n1482. Hilary in the *Commentarius in Matthaeum* 21.3 (on Matt 21:9) claims that in Hebrew 'Hosanna' signifies the 'redemption of the house of David,' and Ambrose *Expositio in Lucam* 9.15 (on Luke 19:37–8) explains the expression as 'redeemer of the house of David.' Jerome Ep 20, recalling Hilary's interpretation, analyses the word to show that the intent is, 'Save, Lord, I beseech you,' and thus demonstrates the necessity of returning to the 'Hebrew sources.' Cf ABD III 'Hosanna.' In the *1516* annotation on Matt 21:9 (*Osanna filio David*) Erasmus discussed at length the points made here; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 78–9. Cf also the dedicatory letter for the edition of Hilary (1523), Ep 1334:752–77, where Hilary's lack of Hebrew is noted.

37 'Exceptional natural gift': *alba indoles*; for *alba* 'white' used idiomatically to express outstanding excellence see OLD *albus* 8(a).

averse to something Augustine also welcomed,[38] that such natural abilities be furnished and equipped through a modest acquaintance with the more liberal disciplines, namely, dialectic, rhetoric, arithmetic, music, astrology; above all, however, through a knowledge of the objects of nature, for example, animals, trees, jewels, and, in addition, places – especially such as divine literature mentions. For it is the case that when territories are recognized, we follow the narrative in our thought, and we are, as it were, carried away with it in our mind, so that we seem not to read about but to look upon the events narrated; at the same time, what you have thus read sticks much more firmly. Now, if we will learn from historical literature not only the setting but also the origin, customs, institutions, culture,[39] and character of the peoples whose history is being narrated, or to whom the apostles write, it is remarkable how much light and – if I may use the expression – life will come to the reading. The reading has to be quite boring and lifeless whenever not only such things but also the terms for almost everything are unknown. The result is that, either guessing shamelessly or consulting absolutely wretched dictionaries, they make a quadruped out of a tree, a fish out of a jewel. It seems profoundly learned if only they add, 'It is the name of a jewel' or 'It is a species of tree' or 'a kind of animal.'[40] But often the understanding of the mystery hangs upon the very nature of the thing.

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38 Cf Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 2.16.23–18.28, 2.27.41–31.49, and 2.39.58–40.61.

39 'Culture': *cultum*, but the word can also mean 'worship' (as frequently in Erasmus) and 'dress,' and the latter may be intended here; cf eg the paraphrase on Acts 13:15 CWE 50 86, where dress appears as a cultural phenomenon that can throw light on the scriptural narrative.

40 In this sentence, 'they' has no immediate referent, but Erasmus clearly has in mind those who, although without a liberal education, nevertheless attempt to expound Scripture; he may be pointing to professors of scholastic theology or perhaps more generally to the medieval exegetical tradition. The kind of identification here mocked was common in the tradition of biblical exposition and frequently appears in the interlinear *Gloss*; cf eg the glosses on Matt 26:7 where 'alabaster' is identified as 'a kind of marble,' and Mark 9:33 where Capernaum is identified as 'a beautiful estate' (Latin *villa*); also two identifications that Erasmus continued to annotate as late as the 1535 edition: locusts as predatory animals (Matt 3:4) and Rhegium as a city in Sicily (Acts 28:13). Erasmus widely deplored the use in education of compilations and wordbooks, of which he frequently mentions two, the *Catholicon* and the *Mammetrectus*; cf eg Epp 26:100, 337:330, 535:33; *Antibarbari* CWE 23 34 with 2n; *De conscribendis epistolis* CWE 25 17, 54–5, 193; *De recta pronuntiatione* CWE 26 388; and the annotation on Heb 11:37 (*in melotis*). To list scornfully such texts was a commonplace among the humanists, eg Valla, who in the preface to book 2 of the *Elegantiae* included

I also think it will be useful for the young man destined for theology[41] to be carefully practised in the figures and tropes of the grammarians and rhetoricians and to acquire preliminary experience in the allegorical explanation of stories, in fables, in comparisons, and, with respect to rhetoric, in those parts especially that treat 'essential questions,' propositions, proofs, amplifications, and emotions, because these especially determine judgment, something that is of particular importance in every kind of study.[42] And since the theological profession rests rather on emotions[43] than on clever arguments, which even the pagans themselves ridicule in pagan philosophers,

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the *Catholicon* among authors who 'made their pupils more ignorant than when they received them'; Valla *Opera omnia* I 41. For a description of these books see the colloquy 'A Meeting of the Philological Society' CWE 40 832–7 and nn7–11; and Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* I 183–224.

41 With the education required here for the young theologian, compare Erasmus' expectations for the teacher in *De ratione studii* CWE 24 672–5. For a critique of Erasmus' programme of liberal education designed for the 'young man destined for theology' see *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* CWE 71 58–61.

42 Quintilian discusses tropes in *Institutio oratoria* 8.6.1–76 and figures in 9.1.1–9.3.102. For his distinction between the two see 9.1.4–5: a trope is an expression in which the normal meaning of a term has been replaced by an artful signification; a figure is a pattern of thought or speech different from the norm. 'Essential questions' (*status*) refers to the fundamental basis on which a case rests: whether the issue at stake is one that must rely on conjecture, definition, or a consideration of 'quality,' ie, in forensic cases a consideration of the character of the offence (*Institutio oratoria* 7). The proposition sets out succinctly at an early point precisely what the advocate will argue (*Institutio oratoria* 4.4.1–9). Proofs, defined as artificial (those based on conjecture) and inartificial (those based on direct evidence, such as witnesses), comprised both confirmation and refutation (*Institutio oratoria* 5). Amplification, though a stylistic feature (*Institutio oratoria* 8.4.1–29), was often associated with the peroration (*Institutio oratoria* 6.1.1–55) as a part of the speech between the proof and the conclusion. For the importance of the emotions see *Institutio oratoria* 6. On allegory see *De copia* CWE 24 336, 611–13 and *Enchiridion* CWE 66 67–9; for the use of allegory in theology and biblical exegesis see CWE 23 259:38–260:3, CWE 24 635, Ep 211:24–36, and *Adagia* III iii 1; on fables see CWE 24 585 and 631–3; on comparisons CWE 24 641–2 and Ep 312, the dedicatory letter for *Parabolae* CWE 23 130–4. For the theological importance of *similitudo* see *Paraphrase on John* CWE 46 13 n2 and 129 nn2, 3, and 4. Figures, tropes, comparisons, and allegories are discussed at length in the *Ratio*; cf *Ratio* nn745 and 906.

43 'Emotions': *affectibus*. In *Institutio oratoria* 6.1.7–25 *affectus* is used in speaking of swaying judgment by appeal to emotions. The contrast between *affectus* 'feeling, emotion' and *probatio* 'rational argument,' 'proof' is found in rhetorical theory (cf *Institutio oratoria* 6.2.3–7), but the word acquires a broader connotation in Erasmus' various discussions of it; cf 428 n17 above.

and Paul denounces in a Christian – and in more than one place[44] – it will be well to be practised in this field throughout youth so that later one might be able to engage more skilfully in discussing theological allegories and commonplaces.[45] Augustine had seen this, if I am not mistaken, when he bids his Licentius return to his liberal studies, from which he was then preparing to depart, because studies of this sort make the intellect more vigorous and lively in approaching also other subjects.[46] Otherwise if anyone is imbued only with those silly, troublesome, and jejune little rules of dialectic, or, as it is taught now, of sophistry – which itself they make into one thing after another every day with their new problems – one turns out, indeed, to be unconquered in debate; but in treating divine literature, God immortal! how flat we see they are, how frigid, indeed, how lifeless! If anyone will seek some ready proof of this, let him place those ancient theologians, Origen, Basil, Jerome[47] beside these more recent ones; let him compare them! He will

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44 On Paul's scorn for 'subtle argument' and 'the wisdom of this world' see 1 Cor 1:17–29, 3:18–21, 1 Tim 1:4, and the paraphrase on 1 Tim 1:4 CWE 44 7–8. For pagans ridiculing pagan philosophers see eg Lucian *Vitarum auctio* (*Philosophers for Sale*), especially the representation of Stoicism (20–5); also Aristophanes *Clouds* 877–1112, where sophistical argumentation is lampooned by the playwright – whom Erasmus places 'first among the poets,' *De ratione studii* CWE 24 669.

45 For 'theological allegories' see the relevant references to *De copia* n42 above. Erasmus never fulfilled his promise to complete a work on scriptural allegory; cf Ep 211:28–36 and *De copia* CWE 24 635; but he might have regarded the lengthy discussions in the *Ratio* and the *Ecclesiastes* (cf *Ratio* 661 with n906 and 677 with n989) as a sufficient treatment of the subject; cf CWE 67 86 n39, however, where it is suggested that the latter passage in the *Ratio* might reflect a start on the *Ecclesiastes*. For 'commonplaces' see *Methodus* n105.

46 Cf Augustine *De ordine* 1.8.21–4. 'Liberal studies': *Musas*. At this point in the *De ordine*, Licentius confesses that he is beginning to find philosophy 'more beautiful' than the poets' tales of lovers and is ready to abandon them for the vision of truth. Augustine urges him to return to those verses, for a modest and limited knowledge of the liberal disciplines (*liberales disciplinae*) makes lovers of truth keener to embrace it, a passage more specifically cited in *Ratio* 507, where see n84. For the same reference, expressing the same idea, see *Enchiridion* (1503) CWE 66 33 and Ep 843:156–8 (1518).

47 Erasmus speaks of these 'ancient theologians' with fulsome praise in the dedicatory epistles to the publication of their work, as well as elsewhere. Of Origen (c 185–c 254) he writes, '[In] … commenting on Holy Scripture … Origen has no rival,' Ep 1844:48–9; cf also his defence of Origen in his *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* CWE 71 67; of Basil (c 330–79), bishop of Caesarea in Cappodocia, '[You will never find anyone] who, I will not say equals, but even distantly

see there a sort of golden river flowing, here some shallow streams, neither very pure nor much like their source.[48] There you will be filled to satiety in the most fruitful gardens, here you will be torn and racked among thorns; there all is full of grandeur, here nothing is noble, while much is mean and hardly worthy of the dignity of theology.

But if one must delay a little longer in profane literature, I should prefer that at all events one do so in literature that is more closely related to the mystic books. I am aware with what arrogance some despise poetry as a subject worse than childish, with what arrogance they despise rhetoric and all good literature, as it is called – and is![49] And yet this literature has given us

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approaches the mind and heart of Saint Basil, filled with the divine presence'; cf Allen Ep 2611:39–41; of the immense learning of Jerome, 'There is no class of author anywhere and no kind of literature which he does not use whenever he likes,' Ep 396:215–16; and in the great edition of Jerome, Erasmus writes (preface II [1516] 1), '… in the best kind of theology St Jerome holds first place' CWE 61 69. See also the concluding paragraph of the *Vita Hieronymi* CWE 61 61–2. For a brief identification of these and other major patristic writers see *Methodus* n114; and for Jerome, ibidem n27.

48 The imagery made a strong impression on William Latimer, who recalls it in praising Erasmus' 1516 edition of the New Testament; cf Ep 520:70–5. Erasmus frequently recurs to the comparison of the ancient Christian writers to a golden river; cf eg Ep 1558:194–6, 261–3; and *Vita Hieronymi* CWE 61 13, 53. The expression 'golden river of speech' is Ciceronian; cf *Academica* 2.38.119. 'Recent ones' refers to the medieval theologians, especially the scholastics. With the contrasting images here of golden river and muddy stream compare the similar images, *Methodus* n23.

49 For the Scriptures as 'mystic books' (here *arcanis libris*) see *Methodus* nn15 and 19. *Bonae litterae* 'good literature' is a designation for the Greek and Latin literature whose study was encouraged by Renaissance humanists for its supposed power to cultivate both a polished literary style and a sound moral and intellectual life. R.J. Schoeck defines *bonae litterae* as 'a shorthand for the *studia humanitatis* [ie liberal studies]'; *Erasmus grandescens* (Nieuwkoop 1998) 116. The range of such literature is suggested by Erasmus' choice of authors in *De ratione studii*, where patristic authors mingle with classical authors. This was 'good literature' both because of its supposed formative power and because it contrasted with the 'crabbed style' and the 'endless queries' of the scholastics. In describing secular literature as *profanae* 'profane,' Erasmus apparently wishes to refer to the root meaning of the compound: the literature that lies *pro* 'in front of' (ie outside of) the *fanum* 'temple,' in this case literature, mainly classical, authored by non-Christian writers; the term does not imply an inherently negative judgment upon the literature; cf the colloquy 'The Godly Feast' CWE 39:192–4 with

those distinguished theologians[50] whom we are now more inclined to neglect than to understand. Christ clothed almost all his teachings in comparisons;[51] this belongs especially to poets. Augustine pointed out the figures of the rhetoricians in the prophets and the Epistles of Paul.[52] Paul himself employed the witness of poets.[53] Where anywhere in these, pray tell, is there anything that reflects Aristotle or Averroës?[54] Where is any mention of first and second intentions, of extensions and restrictions, of formalities or quiddities or haecceities with which everything now is stuffed?[55] In other professions it is an excellent thing for each person to reflect his own principal authorities. Virgil imitated Homer, Avicenna Galen, Aristotle various men depending upon the

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n185. For further definitions of *profanus* see *Adagia* III v 18 *Ostia obdite prophani* 'Shut the door, ye profane' and *In psalmum 85* CWE 64 17–18. For hostility to 'good literature' and especially 'poetry' see Epp 1153:241–4, 1196:602–5 with reference to Nicolaas Baechem, and 1196:482–9 with reference to Vincentius Theoderici.

50 Ie the ancient theologians

51 'Comparisons': *parabolis*; cf Ep 312:28–9: 'For the Greek *parabole*, which Cicero Latinizes as *collatio*, a sort of comparison, is nothing more than a metaphor writ large.'

52 Cf Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 4.7.11–20.58; and Erasmus' annotations on Rom 5:5 ('does not confound'), 8:35 ('who therefore will separate us'), 12:21 ('do not be overcome by evil'), and 13:14 ('in desires').

53 Cf Acts 17:28; 1 Cor 15:33; Titus 1:12.

54 Averroës, a Latinized version of the name of the Islamic philosopher Ibn Rushd (1126–98), wrote paraphrases and commentaries on the works of Aristotle. The commentaries, which had a significant effect on European thinking, endeavoured 'to reconstruct the Aristotelian argument in a way which represents Aristotle's original sense'; *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* ed Edward Craig (London 1998) IV 639.

55 This statement is repeated in *Ratio*; cf 513 with n111. Elsewhere also Erasmus evokes these and similar terms to express his disdain for scholastic method; see eg *Moria* CWE 27 126–7, *Paraclesis* 416 with n74, and *Vita Hieronymi* CWE 61 53. 'First' and 'second intentions' are terms that refer to the consideration of a thing as it is in itself (first intention) and as it is known or perceived (second intention); cf Joseph Gredt *Elementa philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae* (Freiburg in Breisgau 1937) I 91 #112. By 'extension' (*ampliatio*) a term becomes inclusive ('one [ie everyone] can be just'), by 'restriction' (*restrictio*) a term becomes exclusive ('one who is just is wise'); ibidem 44 #46. For the language of 'form' (*formalitas*) cf ibidem 229–30 #275, also 42–3 #45, and 208–29 #249–74; for 'quiddities' and 'haecceities' see CWE 27 126 with n397. For some of these terms see also Piltz *Medieval Learning* 57, 241–2.

subject.[56] Why have we alone dared to abandon in our entire method the principal representatives of our philosophy? Augustine thinks it was fortunate that he encountered Plato above all, for no other reason than that Plato's doctrines come so close to the teaching of Christ, and a transition from what is closely allied is more easily made.[57]

Not that I condemn the studies that we now see established in the public schools,[58] provided they are treated properly and not alone. Let the few whom Jove the just has loved – to use the words of Virgil[59] – embrace these studies too; I am educating the ordinary theologian. And yet, to speak my mind freely, it seems to me by no means safe for one marked out for theology to grow old in profane studies, especially those studies that are somewhat foreign to the enterprise. Those who coat their palate and tongue with wormwood taste the wormwood in whatever they then eat or drink, and to those who are out in the sun for a very long time, whatever they then see presents

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56 Virgil's debt to Homer is manifest in the *Aeneid*: books 1–6, reflecting the *Odyssey*, narrate a journey, while books 7–12, reflecting the *Iliad*, narrate a war. For the complex relation between Avicenna (a Latinized version of the name Ibn Sina), Islamic physician-philosopher (980–1037) and Galen (129–c 210) see Owsei Temkin *Galenism: Rise and Decline of a Medical Philosophy* (Ithaca NY 1973) 97–110, 120–2. John M. Rist (*The Mind of Aristotle: A Study in Philosophical Growth* [Toronto 1989] 4–15) endeavours to show how Aristotle's works reflect influences from literary forms and philosophical arguments contemporary with them, but Erasmus' general statement here is perhaps deliberately imprecise.

57 'A transition is more easily made': *proclivius est transitus*. *Proclivius* may be a careless mistake: in the *Ratio* the expression is emended to read, *proclivior est transitus* 'a transition is easier.' Augustine describes in *Confessions* 7.9 his discovery of similarities between Christian and Platonist doctrines. In fact, however, he refers to the Latin translations made by Marius Victorinus of the works of Plotinus and Porphyry; cf *Confessions* 8.2.3. For Augustine's knowledge of Plato and the Platonists see the articles 'Plato, Platonism' and 'Plotinus' in Fitzgerald *Augustine* 651–4, 654–7.

58 'Public schools': *publicis scholis*; for the expression and its reference see *De pueris instituendis* CWE 26 325 and n98. This passage with its implicit critique of the place of logic in the curriculum (cf the parallel passage in the *Ratio*) is illuminated by Erasmus' more extended account of his own experience as a boy in school in *De pueris instituendis* CWE 26 345; cf also *De ratione studii* CWE 24 670:18–671:2, where Erasmus permits 'dialectic' in the schools, but nothing beyond Aristotle, ie nothing of medieval sophistry. Craig Thompson claims that logic found a relatively small place in Renaissance English schools; cf 'Schools in Tudor England' in *Tudor and Stuart England* 307. Erasmus may, however, be referring here to the universities.

59 Cf Virgil *Aeneid* 6.129–30.

itself with the hue that they themselves bring when the blurring of the lens has impaired their vision. So to those who have spent a good part of their lives in Bartolus,[60] Averroës, Aristotle, and sophistical quibbling, divine literature does not have its true taste but the taste they bring to it. For though it may be nice in treating divine literature to sprinkle it now and then with those exotic spices, so to speak, yet it seems utterly absurd, when you are treating a subject vastly different from all worldly wisdom, to prattle on about nothing except Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Averroës, and authors further beyond the pale,[61] to be struck with amazement at their opinions as though these were oracles. Surely this is not to season the philosophy of Christ but to make it something quite other! But if anyone cries out that apart from these one is not a theologian, I, at all events, shall take comfort from the many examples of so many distinguished men – Chrysostom, Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, finally, Clement,[62] or rather Peter and Paul, who were not only not versed in this knowledge but even condemn it sometimes.[63]

It would be more to the point to hand down to our young tyro the doctrines of Christ reduced to their chief particulars, and this above all from the Gospels, then from the apostolic Epistles, so that everywhere he might have clearly defined target points[64] with which to set in line the rest. As examples of such teachings I note the following few: that Christ established in the

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60 For Bartolus see *Ratio* 515 with nn118, 119. Cf the negative evaluation of Aristotle and Averroës in *Contra morosos* paragraph 74.

61 'Further beyond the pale': *profaniores*

62 The sequence suggests that the intended reference is to Clement of Rome (fl c 96), traditionally placed third after Peter in the succession of Roman bishops. In fact, Erasmus' knowledge of Clement seems to have derived from secondary sources: the *editio princeps* of Clement's *Epistle to the Corinthians* was not published until 1633, and while the pseudepigraphical Clementine literature circulated widely in the sixteenth century, Erasmus recognized (by 1527 at least) that both the *Homilies* and the *Recognitions* were forgeries; cf the annotation on Rom 16:14 ('Hermas, Patroba, Hermes'). Indeed, on occasion he appears to have confused Clement of Rome and Clement of Alexandria (c 150–c 215); cf Robert D. Sider 'Erasmus and Ancient Christian Writers: The Search for Authenticity' in *Nova et vetera: Patristic Studies in Honor of Thomas Patrick Halton* ed John Petruccione (Washington DC 1998) 238–41.

63 Condemnation is perhaps inferred from such passages as 1 Cor 1:19–21 and Col 2:8.

64 On 'target points' see *Ratio* 519 with n147.

world a new people that depended entirely upon heaven[65] and, distrusting all the supports of this world, was rich in a different sort of way, was wise, noble, powerful, and happy[66] in some different way, and found its happiness by despising all things. These were a people[67] who did not know envy – no doubt because their eye was sound;[68] who did not know desire, as they were eunuchs of their own accord;[69] who did not feel the human sense of shame;[70] who the greater anyone was, the more he submitted himself to all;[71] who had been, as it were, born again, refashioned into the simplicity and purity of babes;[72] who, like the birds, lived from day to day[73] – for whom life was of no consequence and death to be desired;[74] who feared neither tyranny nor

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65 For the new people see Matthew 5–7. But the portrait that follows is somewhat classicized, as are the paraphrases on the Sermon on the Mount; cf CWE 45 83–92 and the notes there. For Erasmus' tendency to classicize ethical concepts see CWE 44 xvii–xviii. Erasmus draws a similar portrait of the ideal Christian in the *Paraclesis*; cf 412 with n46.

66 'Happy … happiness': *felix … felicitatem*, words that appear memorably in the prefatory lines of the *Paraphrases* on both Matthew and Mark to elaborate the meaning of *evangelium* 'gospel,' and, along with other expressions, in the paraphrase on the Sermon on the Mount to explore the significance of the Vulgate's *beati* 'blessed.' Cf especially CWE 49 13 n1. I have read the text here as found corrected in the *Ratio* (517). Here in the *Methodus* the text duplicates *rerum*, which might be read 'found the happiness of things [*rerum*] by despising all things [*rerum*].'

67 In the extended passage here the subject, technically *populus* 'people,' slips in sense between the collective people and individual persons.

68 Cf Matt 6:22–3; Luke 11:34; from the Vulgate of which Erasmus adopted for his own translation the Latin *simplex*; in the annotation on Matt 6:23 (*si oculus tuus nequam*) Erasmus explains the significance of *simplex* used to characterize the eye – an eye without defect or disease.

69 Cf Matt 19:12.

70 'Shame': *pudorem*. The expression finds clarification from the *Ratio* (518), where it is replaced by 'did not know ambition.' Here, therefore, we may understand 'shame' as the human sensitivity to position established by wealth and power; cf Mark 10:35–45. Cf also the colourful annotation on Rom 12:16 ('[feeling] the same thing in turn').

71 Cf Matt 20:20–8; Mark 10:42–5; Luke 22:24–7.

72 Cf 1 Pet 1:23–2:2. Cf also the paraphrases on the narrative of the little children blessed (Matt 19:13–15; Mark 10:13–16; Luke 18:15–17), where the moral of the story is explained with images of new birth, purity, simplicity, and innocence, CWE 45 274–5, 49 123, 48 120–1.

73 Cf Matt 6:25–33; Luke 12:22–31.

74 Cf Phil 1:21–3.

death nor Satan, relying on the help of Christ alone.[75] Here were a people who, not even when provoked, knew how to become angry or to curse, who strove to do well even to those who had harmed them;[76] among whom there was the greatest harmony, exactly like that within the members of the same body;[77] among whom mutual charity made all things common.[78] These were people who so lived that they were the salt and light of the world,[79] and who conducted themselves in such a way that they were always girded, as it were, and ready for that final day.[80]

One must also point out briefly how Christ failed in no respect to prepare his disciples for every eventuality by his teaching. On the mountain he taught wherein one should place happiness;[81] he taught in a parable of judgment, under the figure of sheep and goats, by what deeds one is to gain immortality.[82] He taught his disciples how they should behave towards brothers who had offended them;[83] how they should behave towards the weak, towards pagans, towards bad or ungodly governors, how they should behave in the face of enemies and persecutors.[84]

Then the tyro must be advised to note carefully that whole course and circle of Christ's life, how he was born, educated, grew up, his relation to his parents and relatives,[85] how he entered upon his work of preaching the

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75 Cf Rom 8:38–9; also Matt 10:17–31; Phil 4:13.
76 Cf Matt 5:21–2, 38–44; Rom 12:14–21; cf *Ratio* n136.
77 Cf Acts 2:44–5, 4:32; 1 Cor 12:12–26.
78 Cf the paraphrase on Acts 2:45 and the reference to *Adagia* I i 1 in CWE 50 25 n126.
79 Cf Matt 5:13–14.
80 Cf Matt 24:42–4; Luke 12: 35–7. To this point, the *Ratio* copies extensively from the *Methodus*; cf n95 below and *Ratio* n146.
81 Cf Matt 5:1–11.
82 Cf Matt 25:31–46.
83 Cf Matt 18:15–22.
84 Cf Matt 18:2–6, 10 (the weak); Matt 5:43–8 and Luke 6:27–36 (enemies and persecutors); Mark 13:9–11, Luke 21:12–15, and perhaps also Matt 22:15–22 and synoptic parallels (governors). In Jesus' teaching little is said explicitly about Christian behaviour towards pagans, but examples from Jesus' life may be relevant, eg Matt 15:21–8, Mark 7:24–30 (Syrophoenician woman); and Matt 8:5–13, Luke 7:1–10 (centurion). However, Erasmus may here to some extent confuse the teaching of the Gospels with that of the Epistles, which do speak about behaviour towards pagans, eg 1 Cor 6:1–20, 10:27–30; 1 Pet 2:11–12.
85 For 'parents' see Luke 2:41–51; John 2:1–5, 19:26–7. Annotations (*1519* and later) on Matt 12:47 (*quaerentes te*) and on Luke 2:50–1 (*et ipsi non intellexerunt verbum* and *et erat subditus illis*) reflect the difficulties these verses offered to the

gospel,[86] how diverse the miracles he performed, how diverse the answers he gave. He pities the common folk, but cries out against the scribes and Pharisees[87] and lashes out even with a whip against those who were buying and selling.[88] As he everywhere displays a low esteem for ceremonies, so he always requires only faith.[89] In some cases he acted as though he did not know – for example in the matter of Caesar's image.[90] Some people he approached voluntarily, to some he went reluctantly;[91] some he took to himself of his own accord, some who were willing to follow he did not admit.[92] To Herod he replied nothing, to Pilate little, as also to Annas and Caiaphas.[93]

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exegetical tradition by their portrayal of Jesus' relation with his parents, especially his mother. 'Relatives' may allude to the 'brothers' mentioned in Matt 12:46–50; Mark 3:31–5; Luke 8:19–21; also in John 7:1–9. In the paraphrases on these narratives in Matthew, Mark, and John Erasmus reflects the tradition that the so-called brothers of Jesus were in fact not siblings but only relatives; cf CWE 45 207 with n56, CWE 49 54–5, and CWE 46 91 with n7. For the interpretation elsewhere in Erasmus' New Testament scholarship see CWE 50 97 n41.

86 The paraphrase on Matt 3:13–4:25 CWE 45 67–83 carefully notes the manner in which Jesus entered upon his ministry.

87 Cf eg Matt 9:36, 15:32; Mark 8:2 (common folk); Matt 15:1–12, 23:1–36 (scribes and Pharisees); cf also Luke 6:20–6.

88 Cf Matt 21:12; Mark 11:15–16; Luke 19:45; John 2:13–16.

89 Cf Matt 15:1–28, where Jesus' critique of ceremonies is followed by a commendation of faith. However, Erasmus may construct Jesus teaching of 'faith only' from such passages as John 3:16–18 and 6:47, the paraphrases on which emphasize 'faith only'; cf CWE 46 49 and 84–7 (on John 6:43–51); but cf also the paraphrase on Luke 8:50 CWE 47 244. Erasmus' repeated use of the phrase 'faith alone' was easily taken as an indication that he was 'Lutheranizing'; as late as 1531, the Paris theologians censured his *Paraphrases* as reflecting an erroneous view of faith; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 340–1 with n1461; for the representation of faith in the earlier New Testament scholarship cf ibidem 94–5. Cf also 380–1 above and CWE 42 xxxv with n2.

90 Cf Matt 22:15–22; Mark 12:13–17; Luke 20: 20–6.

91 The allusions are ambiguous but for 'voluntary approach,' perhaps the encounter with the woman of Samaria, John 4:7–9; for 'reluctance,' the story of the Syrophoenician woman, Matt 15:21–8; Mark 7:24–30.

92 Cf the call of the fishers (Matt 4:18–22; Mark 1:16–20; Luke 5:1–11) and the call of Matthew the tax collector (Matt 9:9; Mark 2:14; Luke 5: 27–8); those not admitted may be a reference to eg Matt 8:19–22 and Luke 9:57–62; both groups are specified in *Ratio* 552–3.

93 Cf Luke 23:9 (Herod); Matt 27:11–14, Mark 15:1–5, and Luke 23:1–5 (Pilate) – also John 18:33–19:11, where, however, Jesus' response to Pilate is more extensive; Matt 26:62–4, Mark 14:60–2, and John 18:19–24 (Annas and Caiaphas).

One must especially note by what means he prepared for that final struggle,[94] how he died, how he was buried, how he rose again. For there is nothing in these that does not contain the wonderful teaching of godliness, if one looks very closely and philosophizes[95] in the investigation of these things.

Now it is not enough to observe how in diverse things the eternal truth shines out in different ways – according to the historical sense, the tropological sense, the allegorical sense, the anagogic sense – but one must consider also in each of these individually what levels there are, what differences, what method of treatment is there.[96] In how many ways does Origen treat Abraham's temptation from God?[97] Though he is engaged with history, still what topics[98] does he find! – not to mention that the same type receives a different shape, as it were, according to the variety of things, the diversity of times to which it is accommodated: for example, the husks the swine feed upon can be made to fit riches, pleasures, honours, worldly erudition, and yet you are still engaged in tropology. Further, that whole parable can be applied to the Jewish people and the gentiles.[99] There are some things that are applicable especially to the disciples and their times, some things to all

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94 An allusion, apparently, to the 'Last Supper,' with the foot-washing scene as recorded in John 13:1–20, and the prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matt 26:17–46, Mark 14:12–42, Luke 22:7–46).

95 'Philosophizes': *philosophetur*. Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 118 with n509. See *Ratio* 632 with n744, where Erasmus exemplifies 'philosophizing.' For the word as applied to Origen's exegetical endeavours, where it appears to suggest the speculative, ingenious, or recondite interpretation of Scripture, see the General Index CWE 56 sv 'Origen ... philosophizes.' In the *Ratio* it appears with *curiositas* (*Ratio* 555 cf n336), and the application of the word is later illustrated; cf 676 with n984. The text of the latter part of the *Ratio* begins from this point to copy the *Methodus* extensively once again, inserting much into the earlier text; identical text is signified in the *Ratio* by italics; cf 677 with n989.

96 For an account of the 'four senses of Scripture' and some exponents of them see the introduction by Dominic Baker-Smith to *Expositions of the Psalms* CWE 63 xxiii–xxxi; and for an exposition by Erasmus of the tropological sense see *In psalmum 2* CWE 63 78–80; cf also CWE 44 115 n28, CWE 56 33 n4, and *Ratio* 677 where Erasmus briefly explains each of the four senses.

97 Cf Origen *In Genesim homiliae* 8 (on Gen 22:1–14). In the *Ratio* (507–9) Erasmus reviews meticulously Origen's exposition of the passage.

98 Ie theological commonplaces, as they are elsewhere called; see n105 below.

99 See Erasmus' paraphrase on Luke 15:11–32, where the parable is 'applied to' Jews and gentiles, where also the husks are interpreted as the 'world's empty pleasures,' CWE 48 74–9; Erasmus acknowledges that this interpretation is 'in accordance with the mode of the time' CWE 48 74.

people; certain things are conceded to the feelings of those times.[100] Several things are said mockingly, as though with irony.[101] If anyone should try to illustrate this with examples, the subject would require more than one volume.

The young theologian must also be advised that he learn to cite appropriately the testimonies of the divine Scriptures, not from little *summa*s or trifling homiletic texts or from whatever excerpt collections that have been mixed up and poured back and forth already an infinite number of times, one deriving from another, but from the sources themselves.[102] He should not imitate certain people who are not ashamed to twist the oracles of the divine wisdom to a sense foreign to them, sometimes even to the opposite sense. There are some who bring their doctrinal formulations with them and compel the Sacred Scriptures to be subservient to these, though one's own judgments should rather be sought from Scripture. There are some who drag Scripture to the support of public moods and mores, and since one should deduce from Scripture the course that must be followed, it is with the patronage of Scripture that they defend popular behaviour. Furthermore, it is indeed a less obvious, but for that very reason a more harmful kind of distortion when we misuse the words of Divine Scripture to interpret the church as the priests, the world as Christian laity, meanwhile applying to monks what is said about Christians; likewise, when we interpret the swords as the two authorities. What is said about divine worship we divert to ceremonies alone; what is said about the duty of the priest we refer to prayers alone, however said. So that the Scriptures might more surely be interpreted correctly, the theologian should not think it enough to have picked out four or five little words; he

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100 Erasmus illustrates the distinction between the specific and the universal applicability of Scripture in the *Ratio* (529–31) where, in the sequence of five time periods, the third period (extending from the ministry of Christ to the time of the early church) admitted certain practices and regulations required by this specific transition period in salvation-history; cf the paraphrases on Acts 15:20 CWE 50 98 and on Gal 2:10–12 CWE 42 103–4. Indeed, the hermeneutical principle articulated here became one of the fundamental issues raised by the Paris theologians in their 'Censures' of 1531: they argued that in his *Paraphrases* Erasmus had interpreted biblical passages intended for only primitive Christians as if they had universal applicability. Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 339–40.

101 Erasmus illustrates irony in the Scriptures in *Ratio* 654–6.

102 The 'little *summa*s' were a genre widely popular in the Middle Ages. John W. O'Malley SJ describes the many *summae* on the art of preaching in 'Erasmus and the History of Sacred Rhetoric: The *Ecclesiastes* of 1535' ERSY 5 (1985) 5; but see further *Ratio* n119. For Erasmus' disdain of compilations see *Methodus* n40; also Ep 858:44–50.

should consider the context from which the words arise, by whom they are spoken, to whom, the time, the occasion, the words, what has preceded, what follows. For it is from gathering and weighing these things that one grasps the meaning of what is said. If from the start you are careful to do this as well as possible, you will in time come to do it easily as well.[103] We must also observe the special idiom of theological discourse. For that Divine Spirit has a sort of language of its own, and those sacred writers, even when they write Greek, reflect much of the Hebrew idiom.[104] And herein lies for many the possibility of going astray.

What I am now about to say will perhaps offer an advantage of the highest importance to anyone who applies the principle with skill. It is this: either prepare for yourself or take over from someone else a number of theological

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103 For a double repetition of this explanation of 'context' cf *Ratio* 523 with n169 and 680. With the wider statement here of exegetical method compare that in *Hyperaspistes* 2 CWE 77 360 and *Ratio* 680–90, where Erasmus develops extensively the discussion here. Elsewhere also we frequently find a critique of common exegetical practices: on twisting Scripture, misapplying it, interpreting from preconceptions, and taking words out of context; see eg the colourful critique in *De libero arbitrio* CWE 76 7 and in the annotations on Rom 5:14 ('unto the likeness'), 12:1 ('reasonable service') and 14:6 ('and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat'); also the mockery of scholastic exegesis in *Moria* CWE 27 144–7. Cf Erasmus' harsh words in the annotation on Luke 22:36 (*sed nunc qui habet sacculum*): 'No heresy seems to me more pernicious, no blasphemy more criminal than … twisting, or, rather, corrupting the sacred teaching of Christ …' ASD VI-5 589:810–590:814. For strictures against adapting Scripture to suit public morals see 'Beliefs Worthy of a Christian' in *Enchiridion* CWE 66 101–3; and for the definition of 'world' see *Enchiridion* CWE 66 101, *In psalmum* 2 CWE 63 99, the paraphrases on James 4:6 CWE 44 162 and on 1 John 2:15–17 CWE 44 182–3, *De praeparatione* CWE 70 401, CWE 43 370 n7, and especially *Ecclesiastes* 3 CWE 68 901–3; compare also the Argument of 1 John CWE 44 173 with Ep 1538:49–55 and n4. Erasmus tended to minimize the distinction between monks and the laity. The latter could be as 'truly Christian' as the former: '… whoever is a true Christian is monk enough' *De contemptu mundi* CWE 66 174. The 'two swords' were commonly interpreted as the two Testaments, an interpretation to which Erasmus refers in his annotation on Luke 22:36 (*sed nunc qui habet sacculum*) ASD VI-5 590:826–8; cf the *Gloss* and Nicholas of Lyra on Luke 22:38; also the paraphrase on Luke 22:38 CWE 48 197 with n39. But *dicio* 'authority' suggests that here Erasmus refers to an interpretation that understood the two swords as the two powers, secular and sacred.

104 Erasmus demonstrates this stylistic feature much more fully in *Ratio* 644–8, and in his *Annotations* he repeatedly shows how the Greek of the New Testament is shaped by Hebrew idiom; cf the General Index to CWE 56 SV 'idiom – Hebrew.'

headings under which you put everything you have read, placing them into something like pigeonholes, so that you might the more readily produce what you wish when you please – I note by way of example the subject of faith, of fasting, of enduring evils, helping the weak, ceremonies, godly devotion, and other things of this kind (for any number of categories can be imagined). Arrange these in order according to opposites or similarities, as I once pointed out in my *Copia* also.[105] Whatever is noteworthy anywhere in all the books of the Old Testament, in the Gospels, in the apostolic Epistles, which either agrees or disagrees should be listed under the appropriate category; in fact, if anyone likes, he can bring to these topics what he deems will be of use from the ancient commentators, likewise, lastly, from the books of the pagans. I rather think I notice from Jerome's own writings that he used this method.[106] If something has to be discussed, materials will be ready at hand; if something is to be clarified, a comparison of passages will be easy. For in the opinion of not only Origen but also of Augustine the best method of interpreting divine literature is this: to make an obscure passage clear through a comparison of other passages and to explain mystic Scripture from mystic Scripture.[107]

And now, furnished with these things, let him engage in constant meditation on divine literature, 'let him take care to turn by night, by day' its

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105 Cf *De copia* CWE 24 635–48. Cf also Ep 1171:14–41 (dedicatory letter to the *Paraphrase on James*) and *De ratione studii* CWE 24 672–3. 'Theological headings' translates *locos theologicos*. For *loci* as 'commonplaces' see the Introductory Note to *Ecclesiastes* CWE 67 186, 189–90 and *Ecclesiastes* 2 CWE 68 645–6. For the meaning of *loci* generally in Erasmus see Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* I 514–18; and for an attempt to explore the significance of the *loci* for an understanding of Erasmus' theology see Hoffmann *Rhetoric and Theology* 151–6. Christine Christ-von Wedel has shown the widespread use in the sixteenth century of the method recommended here and noted that, as a form of theological systematizing, it offered a radical alternative to that of scholasticism; *Erasmus of Rotterdam: Advocate of a New Christianity* (Toronto 2013) 86–7.

106 Cf *Vita Hieronymi* CWE 61 33.

107 Cf Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 2.9.14 and 3.26.37. For commonplaces in Origen, and for the principle that the sense is to be clarified by comparing one passage with other scriptural passages; see Henri de Lubac *Histoire et esprit: l'intelligence de l'écriture d'après Origène* (Paris 1950) 311–12; cf also Origen *In Numeros homiliae* 12.1 cited by de Lubac. The principle was, in fact, widely acknowledged in early Christianity; cf eg Tertullian *De resurrectione mortuorum* 21.2.

pages.[108] Let him have the Scriptures always in hand, always in pocket.[109] From Scripture let something always sound in his ears or meet his eyes or hover within his mind. It will not be ill-advised to learn the divine books word for word, especially the books of the New Testament, which contribute so much more effectively to our profession that today they are able to suffice even by themselves[110] – but also those of the Old Testament that have a particularly close correspondence to the New, for example, Isaiah. And yet, if, by arranging passages, as I have said, you frequently compare Paul with the Gospels, and compare Isaiah and the rest of the Old Testament passages with both, you will find that these will of their own accord stick in the memory and become fixed there. If this labour deters some people, I ask that each reflect on this: how is it appropriate that the future theologian commit to memory the petty rules of sophistic, commit to memory commentaries on Aristotle (such as they are), commit to memory the so-called conclusions and arguments of Scotus,[111] but is reluctant to bestow the same effort upon the divine books, from whose springs all theology flows – such, at least, as truly is theology? But how much more satisfying to swallow this labour (for I should not say 'tedium') once and for all than to have recourse to dictionaries, summaries, and indexes[112] with labour ever recurring whenever you have to cite or discuss something – like those who, having no dishes at home, whenever they need goblet or plate, beg their neighbour for one to use. You, rather, make your own breast a library of Christ; bring forth from it as from a storehouse things new or old,[113] as the occasion demands. Things penetrate the minds of the hearers in a much more lively way when they come forth from your own heart as though with the vigour of life than when they are filched from the mishmash of others.

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108 Cf Horace *Ars poetica* 269. The idea, however, is biblical; cf Ps 1:2.

109 Cf *Paraclesis* 421: 'Why do we not carry these books near our heart, have these books always in our hands?'

110 Cf *Paraclesis*: the 'Gospels and Epistles' are our 'incomparable authorities'… our 'earliest infancy' should be 'formed by the Gospels' (421). 'Today' may suggest an implicit contrast with the earliest period of Christianity, when the Old Testament remained the essential Bible for Christians.

111 For the 'conclusions and arguments' of Scotus see *Ratio* 694 with n1071.

112 Cf *Methodus* nn40 and 102. Compare Erasmus' response to Cousturier: to learn the languages was a less laborious way to understand the Scriptures than to comb through commentaries! 'New Testament Scholarship' 275–6.

113 Cf Matt 13:52.

Someone may ask, 'Well, surely you don't think Divine Scripture so easy that it can be understood without commentaries?' Why not, if its teachings have been learned and that comparison of passages, as I have described, has been applied? In any case, what else have they done who were the first to publish commentaries on Divine Scripture, among whom Origen is chief? What forbids others from arriving at the same place as they if they proceed by the same path? Not that I recommend this! Rather, let the labour of the ancients save us from part of the work. Let us find assistance in their commentaries, provided, first, that we choose the best of them, for example, Origen (who is so far first that no one else can be compared to him), Basil, Nazianzus, Athanasius, Cyril, Chrysostom, Jerome, Ambrose, Hilary, Augustine;[114] second, that we read even these with discrimination

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114 For Erasmus' somewhat extravagant praise of Origen, Basil, and Jerome see *Methodus* n47. When Erasmus wrote the *Methodus*, much of the work of the Greek authors mentioned here was available only in Latin translation, while problems of authenticity and attribution (to which Erasmus presently refers) rendered the corpus of both Latin and Greek authors uncertain. Nevertheless, in his own *Annotations* and *Paraphrases* Erasmus drew on all the authors mentioned here, of which the first six listed (including Origen) were Greek speakers, while the last four were Latin speakers. **Origen** (c 185–c 251), 'perhaps the most prolific writer in antiquity' (Ferguson *Early Christianity* II 835) was born in Alexandria and was active there as a teacher and scholar until c 233, when he went to Jerusalem and Caesarea, where he spent the last years of his life and died, having suffered persecution under Decius. Erasmus published a 'Fragment of Origen on Matthew' in 1527 (Ep 1844; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 328 with n1404) and the *Opera* posthumously. In *1516* Origen (in Latin) was a chief source for the annotations on Matthew and Romans; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 78 and 328 with n1398. **Basil** (c 330–79), known as 'the Great,' bishop of Caesarea (370–9) in Cappadocia, is regarded as a leader among those who brought a solution to the Trinitarian controversies of the fourth century; he was admired by Christian humanists of the sixteenth century for his apparent advocacy of classical literature in his *Ad adolescentes* (*Address to Young Men*); cf CWE 24 673:9n. For Erasmus' early attempt to translate Pseudo-Basil's *Commentarius in Isaiam* see Ep 229; and for his later role in the Greek edition of Basil's *Opera* see Allen Ep 2611 introduction and 'New Testament Scholarship' 327 with n1395. **Gregory of Nazianzus** (c 329–90), a reluctant administrator, was bishop of Constantinople briefly (in 381) and, after 381, of Nazianzus (in Cappadocia); his traditional title, 'the theologian,' won especially by his five *Orationes* (*Theological Orations*) on the nature of God, is shared only with the apostle John, but he also wrote much poetry, some of it of considerable biographical interest (cf *Ratio* n109). He appears only occasionally in the *Annotations*. **Athanasius** (c 300–73) was bishop of Alexandria (328–73) and a

and judgment. They were men, certain things they did not know, at points their minds wandered. Sometimes they were nodding; they conceded some things to the heretics in order to overcome them in any way at all (for at that time all things were seething with the contentions of the heretics). Moreover, to virtually every one of these are falsely ascribed many titles that are in circulation; and indeed (what is more shameful) in their books many passages have been added by others, as shown in the case of Jerome at least, as I have

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central figure in the Arian controversy – inevitably since Arius was a priest in his diocese. In 1527 Erasmus published a set of translations of Athanasius' work (Ep 1790). For the brief 'canon' of the New Testament ascribed to Athanasius that prefaced Froben's 1522 separate Latin edition of the New Testament, and for the false attribution to Athanasius of Theophylact's commentaries, see 'New Testament Scholarship' 184 and 106 with n461. He too appears infrequently in the *Annotations*. **Cyril** (375–444), bishop of Alexandria (412–44), was intimately involved in the Christological controversies of the early fifth century that eventually resulted in the Chalcedonian Definition of 451; Erasmus drew heavily on his work in his exposition of the Gospel of John (cf CWE 46 passim). **John Chrysostom** (c 342–407), a distinguished preacher, first as a priest in Antioch (ordained 386), thereafter as bishop of Constantinople (398–404), was the author of many homilies on various books of the New Testament (cf *Ratio* n100). His *Homilies* on Matthew (partly in Greek), John (in Latin translation), and the pastoral Epistles (also in Latin) are reflected in Erasmus' New Testament scholarship from the very first edition. For the enormous and increasingly dramatic influence of Chrysostom on the *Annotations* see 'New Testament Scholarship' 78 with n311, 287–9, 291–2 with n1242, 327 with n1393, and 349–50; and for Erasmus' evaluation of Chrysostom, *Ratio* n100. **Ambrose** (c 339–97) as bishop of Milan (374–97) fearlessly confronted the imperial power to force the establishment of orthodox Christianity in the Roman empire. Ambrose himself was inclined to allegorical exegesis. To him was ascribed the literal exegesis of Ambrosiaster on the Pauline Epistles (cf CWE 56 335 n7), on which Erasmus consistently depended – for mistaken reasons (cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 62). Ambrose became one of the 'four Doctors' of the Western Church, along with **Jerome** (c 347–420), **Augustine** (354–430), and the later Gregory the Great (540–604). **Hilary** (315–c 367), elected bishop of Poitiers, France in 353, was one of the first to attempt in Latin the defence and exposition of the Nicene formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity, more particularly of the Son's relation to the Father. He wrote commentaries on the Gospel of Matthew and on the Psalms. Erasmus published an edition of the *Opera* of Hilary in 1523 and frequently referenced his work in his *Annotations*, but not without reservation; cf eg *Methodus* n36. The majority of these names, with a characterization of the literary style of each, are included in a list similar to the one found here in *De vidua christiana* (1529) CWE 66 246.

publicly demonstrated, and is obvious likewise in the case of others.[115] And if the reader does not have eyes for cases like this, there is a danger that he will take the whim of an imposter or fool as an oracle of Jerome or Ambrose.

Further, since it is impossible to go through all the authors, the young theologian should read the best of those who are respected. For what does one gain by investing good time badly in these neoterics, who are more truly compilers than interpreters.[116] In the first place, how many things are there in these that you must afterwards unlearn with greater effort? Secondly, if there is anything good in them, you will find that it has been drawn from the ancients, but maimed and mutilated because the moderns have been compelled on account of their ignorance of languages and of essential subjects[117] to omit many things, and those possibly the best, since they did not understand them. What of the fact that a good many of them do not even gather their materials from the ancients but filch them from collections that have themselves quite often been gathered and mixed together with one another, as though they had been drawn from the last of a series of pools, so that they taste almost nothing like their source. Finally, granted that they teach the same things, how frigid all things are with them, how mean they seem because of the most ineloquent stammering of the writers.[118] But Jerome so seasons and enriches all things with sweet delights that when he wanders from the truth, when he digresses from the subject, he still teaches more that is good than they do when they deliver the subject correctly – not to mention further that we ourselves become altogether like the authors with whom we are constantly engaged. For the properties of foods are not transferred to the condition of our body in the same way as reading affects the mind and character. If we are occupied with dry, frigid, artificial, thorny and quarrelsome writers, we will inevitably become like them. But if we are occupied with those who truly breathe Christ, who glow, who are alive, who both teach and manifest true godliness, we shall resemble these, at least to some degree.

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115 In his editions of the works of Jerome, Erasmus placed in a separate volume the works he believed were falsely ascribed to Jerome (cf CWE 61 xxii, xxvi–xxvii); this was volume II in the first edition, volume IV in the subsequent editions (1524–6 and 1533–4), CWE 61 xxix–xxx. Erasmus justifies and defends his critical judgments in prefaces to volume II (1516), for which see CWE 61 67–97.

116 On the neoterics see *Methodus* n29.

117 'Essential subjects': *rerum*, which I have taken to refer to the subjects Erasmus recommended along with the languages as basic to understanding the Scriptures; cf *Methodus* 433–6.

118 On the 'stammering' of the scholastics see *Methodus* n20.

But, you will say, if there is nothing further, I shall be inadequately prepared for the scholastic *palaestra*. Well, we are training not a pugilist but a theologian, and a theologian who prefers to express with his life rather than in syllogisms what he professes. There is no reason why you should be so greatly displeased with yourself if, among those, you seem to be not much of a theologian, since among them not even Jerome himself would have any response to make,[119] possibly not even our very Paul. At fault is not theology itself, which was not created thus, but its treatment by certain individuals who have dragged down that entire discipline to the subtleties of the dialecticians and to Aristotelian philosophy, so that there is much more philosophy than theology there. And yet it is possible for some rhetorician or mathematician or musician to discuss the same thing in such a way that no one will now understand it except one who has first learned inside out the whole essence of these disciplines. But why is it necessary for the theologian to make definitive responses to all the petty questions of everyone? Of these, there is neither number nor measure nor end, while a thousand spring forth afresh, like the hydra's head, for everyone lopped off.[120]

There are some things it is not really pious to examine. There are some things of which we can be ignorant without any cost to our salvation. In the case of some things, greater erudition is revealed by being doubtful, and, with the Academics, by withholding judgment than by making a pronouncement.[121] But if anyone has such great power of intellect that he is able to

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119 Ie 'among those' trained in scholastic theology

120 The hydra had a dog-like body and numerous snaky heads (seven, according to Erasmus, *Adagia* I iii 27, but the number given varies; cf *Adagia* I x 9). When the heads were cut off, they were replaced by two or three more. The hydra was slain by Hercules, who cauterized the wound when each head was cut off, thus preventing it to sprout again. The image appears repeatedly in the work of Erasmus (cf eg *Institutio christiani matrimonii* CWE 69 249 with n126), but especially in his characterization of religious opponents, eg the Lutherans (cf Ep 1410:4–5) and such Catholic critics as Diego López Zúñiga (cf Ep 1432:38).

121 'By withholding judgment' is expressed in the text here by the Greek *ἐπέχειν*, a term in the technical vocabulary of the ancient Skeptics; cf Sextus Empiricus *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* 1.22.196. However, the Academics, though deriving from Plato's Academy, came to assume a posture of skepticism; for their practice of 'withholding judgment' see Cicero *Academica* 1.12.45–6. In the *Moria* CWE 27 118 Erasmus appears to reflect his own predilection for Academic skepticism.

embrace both kinds of studies,[122] let him go! let him proceed where his abilities beckon, and good luck to him![123] But it is, nevertheless, from these that one should begin; with these, I think, the greater part of life should be spent. But if either must be abandoned, I can only confess the absolute truth, that this is the side I should prefer to favour. It is better to be a little less the sophist than to have little understanding of the Gospels and the letters of Paul. It is preferable to be ignorant of certain doctrines of Aristotle rather than not to know the precepts of Christ. Finally, I should prefer to be a godly theologian with Jerome than to be undefeated with Scotus. This, at least, cannot be denied, that the teaching of Christ has been defended and illuminated by those ancient theologians, whom I should allow to be set aside only if it were clear that, by the cunning ever so cunning and the subtleties ever so subtle in which these scholastics engage, either a single pagan has ever been converted to faith in Christ, or a single heretic refuted and changed.[124] For if we are willing to admit the truth, the fact that fewer heresies exist today, we owe more to the stake than to syllogisms. Is there any kind of knot that can be tied with dialectical subtlety that the same subtlety may not untie if both sides are free to make whatever assumptions they wish? But those simple writings were able in the course of a few small years to make new the peoples of the whole world.[125]

But let us dismiss the comparison of studies. To each let his own study be honourable and, to use the words of Paul, let everyone be convinced in his own mind.[126] Let anyone who likes scholastic debates follow what is taught in the schools. But if anyone prefers to be trained for godliness rather than for

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122 'Both kinds of studies': perhaps referring ambiguously to subject (both scholastic philosophy and the Scriptures) and also to method (both logical analysis and imaginative response as contrasting approaches to a text).

123 Erasmus cites with slight modification Horace *Epistles* 2.2.37.

124 Cf *Moria* CWE 27 128–9, where Erasmus satirically implies that scholastic theology has no power to convert 'heathen or heretic.'

125 With the sentiments expressed here compare Ep 1381:283–302; also *Paraclesis* 414 with n60 and *Ratio* 569 with n419.

126 Cf Rom 14:5. Erasmus concludes the *Methodus* in a conciliatory tone that recognizes as legitimate for theological training both traditional scholastic studies and the new programme of liberal and biblical studies, but prejudices nevertheless the latter. Cf the attempt at conciliation in the letter to Lorenzo Campeggi, Ep 1062, dedicatory to the set of *Paraphrases* from Ephesians to 2 Thessalonians written in the much more explosive context of 1520 and 1521; 'New Testament Scholarship' 166–7 with n658.

disputation, he should occupy himself first and above all with the sources, should occupy himself with those writers who have drunk most nearly from the sources. Prayer will compensate for what has been lost in syllogisms. And you will be a theologian sufficiently unconquered if you have made such progress that you succumb to no vice, yield to no desires, even if you leave the loser in some 'quodlibetical'[127] disputation. Whoever teaches Christ purely is an exceedingly great teacher.

The End of the *Methodus*

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127 'Quodlibetical': *quodlibetica*, alluding to the *quodlibet*s of the scholastics, ie the academic exercises in which a master attempted to respond to any question from participants; cf eg Thomas Aquinas *Quaestiones quodlibetales*.

# THE *APOLOGIA* OF DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM

*D. Erasmi Roterodami apologia*

translated by
JOHN M. ROSS

annotated by
ROBERT D. SIDER

# THE *APOLOGIA* OF DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM[1]

And now to make my defence[2] against the few[3] who will protest: the apostle Paul, in Luke's account, declares himself fortunate that he would be pleading his case before Agrippa, who, on account of his long association with the Jews, knew well and had long experience with all those matters on which the issue turned.[4] I only wish that I too could congratulate myself on the same score! In fact, my situation is quite different from that of St Paul, for I do not even need a defence except before those who have no understanding of the whole matter in dispute and who resort to slander simply because they do not understand. Even if I have not fully achieved what I attempted, I have no doubt whatever that I shall earn the gratitude of those who have even a modest acquaintance with Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, have engaged seriously in the investigation of the mysteries of Divine Scripture, and have applied themselves diligently and profitably to the great theologians of the past, whose reliability is matched by their antiquity. So, paradoxically, the people who will not only sanction and approve my efforts but will also be extraordinarily grateful for them will be the very ones who have no great need of this work of mine, and who alone, because of their training in good literature,[5] can be critical of certain things because they are in a position[6] to

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1 The title in all Froben editions (1516–35) of the New Testament; in Holborn, 'The *Apologia* of Desiderius Erasmus'

2 'Defence': *apologia*, a Latin transliteration of a Greek term designating a speech of defence before a judge or jury. Although the Greek word appears in the New Testament (eg Acts 22:1; 2 Tim 4:16), its transliteration did not become domiciled in Latin until late antiquity. Cf *Ratio* n551.

3 against the few] Added in *1519*; in *1516*, 'against those' understood from the context. Cf *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* CWE 71 58: 'I knew there was going to be trouble, for there was no lack of protests before the work was even published.'

4 Cf Acts 26:2–3. In 1527, under attack from the Spanish monks, Erasmus began his defence in precisely the same vein in a letter to Alonso Manrique de Lara, archbishop of Seville and inquisitor-general in Spain, a letter that served as the first preface to the *Apologia adversus monachos*; cf Ep 1879:5–10. For the use of this allusion to the speech of Paul, Erasmus had a model in Jerome; cf Jerome Ep 57.1 *De optimo genere interpretandi*.

5 'Good literature': for the expression see *Methodus* n49.

6 are in a position] First in *1527*; previously, 'are able'

judge. On the other hand, those who cannot possibly cast a vote on these matters and who stand in greater need of this work precisely to the extent that they are ignorant of good literature, these not only will *not* welcome a work prepared specifically for their use but will even raise a cry against it and calumniate and condemn it.

To reject it seems a matter of gross ingratitude, to condemn it is a mark of utter shamelessness, for can you imagine anything more shameful than to condemn a book you have not even read[7] – and a book of such a kind that, even if you were to read it, you would not be able to deliver a verdict upon it without a knowledge of the languages? And can you imagine a worse case of ingratitude than to repay with malicious misrepresentation such immense labour and such long hours of work, which have been undertaken only with an intent to help and which no expression of gratitude could adequately repay? Ingratitude is everywhere an ugly thing, and no one is more deserving of our gratitude than those who, at considerable financial cost to themselves and with the sacrifice of their pleasures – even with some danger to health and life – devote all their energies to this one end: to make some contribution to the welfare of the world through the monuments of their talents and ability. But I doubt whether you will find a worse example anywhere of man's ingratitude than this, nor can I think of any other circumstance where there is more truth in Seneca's elegant but weighty saying that it is safer to offend certain people than to put them under an obligation.[8] 'Nothing is wasted,' says he,[9] 'like a benefit conferred on the ungrateful.'[10] But more wasted, at least in my opinion, is a kindness bestowed on those who do not recognize it as a kindness; and those who do not understand a favour show less gratitude than those who do not acknowledge it. For the latter, even if they pretend otherwise, still feel themselves under obligation and are sometimes compelled through shame to make some acknowledgment; hence the hope remains that

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7 Erasmus frequently complained about people who condemned his books without reading them; cf eg Epp 1196:129–32, 1200:50–4 with n10, and *Contra morosos* paragraph 88. Jerome made a similar complaint; cf the *Prologus* to Isaiah, Weber 1096.

8 Seneca *De beneficiis* 2.24.1

9 says he] Added in *1535*

10 Seneca *De beneficiis* 4.27.5. With the characterization of ingratitude here compare Erasmus' comments in *Contra morosos* paragraphs 102–5.

they will some day think better of it.[11] The former interpret a benefit as an injury and when benefited by a good deed haul their benefactor into court.

Theologians in particular have a duty to show not just gratitude but generosity and kindliness. And it is for theologians especially that I have toiled at this work of mine, particularly those theologians who have not had either the leisure or the opportunity to acquire that liberal education without which Scripture cannot be[12] completely understood or responsibly handled. I made this effort to assist their studies, so that my industry might supply what their lot in life denied them.

Yet if any are going to protest, my guess is that it is from this crowd they will come. Physicians welcome anything that is conducive to the renewal of their profession, lawyers do not despise such help, and philosophers accept it. God forbid that[13] we theologians alone should obstinately protest and that we should be the ones to reject what is to our advantage. It is certainly very annoying to get no thanks for a benefit conferred in a generous spirit. It is more annoying to receive abuse instead of a reward from those whom you are eager to help, and to have to defend yourself against a charge of personal injury when the plaintiffs are the very people from whom you might rightly have demanded the gratitude you deserved. Seneca considers it the highest kind of generosity and close to the divine beneficence to do good not just gratuitously but also in the full knowledge that one's generosity is not wasted.[14] I think I shall surpass even this if I continue to confer a benefit even on those who repay kindness with injury. Just as faithful physicians continue to help the sick in spite of protests and abusive language, so I shall add this additional bonus[15] to my good deed; I hope that as a result my critics will come to recognize the benefit they are receiving.

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11 'They will think better of it': *resipiscent*, an important word in Erasmus' New Testament scholarship. In *1516* he recommended it in the annotation on Matt 3:1 (*poenitentiam agite*) as an alternative to the Vulgate expression; in a *1522* addition to the annotation on 2 Cor 7:10 (*stabilem*) he explained in detail how the word reflected the process of repentance; cf the paraphrase on the verse, CWE 43 242 with nn12, 16; also CWE 44 13 n5 and 'New Testament Scholarship' 202 with n788.

12 be … handled.] First in *1535*; previously, 'be understood in its full depth'

13 God forbid that] Added in *1527*; previously the sentence read: 'We theologians obstinately protest and are the ones that reject what is to our advantage.'

14 Cf Seneca *De beneficiis* 4.25.3.

15 'This … bonus': *hoc velut auctario*, ie the *Apologia*. The *auctarium* was an addition beyond the due measure or weight (cf L&S); the 1518 edition of Erasmus' letters was published under the title *Auctarium selectarum aliquot epistolarum* and is called a 'supplement' in CWE 3 349.

First, therefore, I earnestly exhort all theologians whose age or responsibilities allow them the time to make some acquaintance with Greek – and with Hebrew as well, if they can. They should philosophize in the actual sources of arcane Scripture,[16] should diligently[17] read through the ancient theologians, who are commended to us both by their erudition and by the saintliness of their lives. Then if they wish, let them compare and evaluate my work; only then[18] let them express their approval if I have judged a passage rightly, or correct me in a friendly spirit if, being human, I have strayed from the truth and fallen short of achieving what I have unremittingly pursued. If I[19] am granted this, I have won my case, and I shall have advocates instead of accusers. But let those who do not grant me this concede this much at least, if only as a favour: let them recognize that I undertook all these labours with the pure and godly desire to help. If at some point I have not succeeded, it is an error, not a crime, and I deserve to be corrected; I do not deserve to be assailed. For there is nothing that I admit more readily than that I know nothing.[20] Let others make what claims they please. For my part, as befits[21] my modest abilities, I make no claims, but I offer what I can, unhesitatingly ready to sing a palinode if I have somewhere slipped, for we all make mistakes. In fact, as soon as I discover a mistake, I shall even act as my own censor.[22] St Jerome has no patience with a critic who can condemn

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16 In this context, the 'sources of arcane Scripture' are evidently the Scriptures in their original languages. They are 'arcane' because of their mystic meaning; to philosophize in them is to ponder imaginatively that meaning. Cf *Methodus* n95 (philosophize) and n19 (mystic); for 'arcane' see CWE 43 148 n38, CWE 50 99 n64, and the paraphrase on Matt 26:14 CWE 45 345 with n22.

17 diligently] First in *1535*; previously, 'continually'

18 only then] First in *1535*; previously, 'and so'

19 If I … my case] First in *1527*; previously, with a change only in the position of a comma, 'But if I am granted my case, I have won,' which is the reading followed by Holborn.

20 Perhaps an intended reminiscence of the famous defence of Socrates as told in Plato *Apology* 21B–D, where Socrates admits that he has no wisdom and neither knows nor thinks that he knows.

21 as befits] *pro* added in *1519*; perhaps omitted in *1516* by mistake

22 'Censor': *censor* here possibly meaning simply 'critic,' but elsewhere the term is applied with obvious allusion to the ancient Roman magistrate who might officially pass judgment on morals and conduct; cf eg Ep 1033:199–201 with n28. Among other critics, Erasmus refers to both Lee and Béda with this image in mind; for Lee see *Responsio ad annotationes Lei* 2 (Note 133) CWE 72 262; and for Béda, *Supputatio* ASD IX-5 236:512n and ibidem 416:691–701.

but cannot teach.[23] The former is the mark of a tyrant, the latter of a friend and scholar.[24]

Now, it is beyond dispute among scholars and has – I think, as a result of the writings of many authors – been accepted even by the unlearned that this edition of the New Testament is not Jerome's as he himself revised it.[25] Even so, I am not tearing this work to pieces or disparaging it, whatever its quality or authorship. I have only restored what the passage of time and the mistakes of copyists had corrupted, noting also in passing what the Translator had rendered either ambiguously or with insufficient care – I hesitate to say, 'incorrectly,' though Jerome was not afraid to say so in many places.[26] This I have done not, as they say, with a wave of the hand[27] or rashly, but, following the intent of the canons,[28] I first checked the Latin copies against the Greek originals – relying not just on any exemplars or on a few. Lorenzo Valla affirms that he had followed seven reliable manuscripts.[29] For my first revision[30] I had

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23 Cf Jerome Ep 57.12.

24 'The former,' ie the critic who can condemn but cannot teach; 'the latter,' ie the critic who can teach, that is, both point out a fault and help to correct it

25 as he himself revised it.] Added in *1535*. For Jerome's work of revision and translation see *Methodus* n27. In the prefatory letter to his edition (1505) of the annotations of Valla (cf n29 below) Erasmus had described clearly the nature of Jerome's work on the biblical texts and the relation of Jerome's work to the subsequent text of the Vulgate; cf Ep 182:165–91.

26 In his commentaries on several of the Pauline Epistles Jerome occasionally 'corrects' the Latin text he was reading – an indication that he was not the translator of that text; cf eg the *1516* annotation on Eph 5:14 (*et illuminabit te*). Erasmus makes the point more explicitly in a *1527* addition to the annotation on Eph 4:29 (*aedificationem fidei*); cf *Contra morosos* paragraphs 54 with n149 and 79b with n204.

27 Cf *Adagia* I iv 27.

28 Cf Ep 182:191–4, where Erasmus refers to Gratian's *Decreta*, identified in Ep 182:193n.

29 Lorenzo Valla (1400–64) produced two sets of notes on the New Testament. The first set, the *Collatio Novi Testamenti* was undertaken in the 1440s, while Valla was in Naples, the second between 1453 and 1457, when he was in Rome employed in the papal curia. In 1505 Erasmus published Valla's second set of notes as the *Annotationes*; cf Ep 182. For the seven Greek manuscripts (and four Latin) used by Valla see Bentley *Humanists* 36–8; and 'New Testament Scholarship' 19 with n102.

30 'Revision': *recognitione*. In *1516* the word apparently meant quite specifically 'revision,' ie the revision of the Vulgate; see de Jonge *Novum Testamentum* 394–413. Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 29 with n149, 46 with n202; Translator's Note to 'Title Pages' 740 with n2; also n31 immediately below.

the help of four Greek manuscripts; for the second,[31] five; for[32] the third the Aldine edition was available and some further manuscripts; for the fourth[33] the Spanish edition also was at hand.[34] Finally, I consulted some volumes of

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31 second] First in *1527*. From *1516* to *1522 in posteriore* 'subsequent,' a reading that suggests that in *1516* Erasmus referred to two revisions for the 1516 edition: the first perhaps in England, where, according to this statement, he would have used four manuscripts; the 'subsequent' presumably at Basel, where he was preparing the text for Froben, his publisher, and in the text here claims to have had five manuscripts at his disposal. But the change in *1527* from *posteriore* to *secunda* would seem to suggest that Erasmus now wished *recognitione* to be understood as the equivalent of 'edition,' and that four Greek manuscripts were used for the first edition, five for the second. The reading of this sentence, however, has been widely debated; see especially de Jonge *Novum Testamentum* 403–4 and ibidem *Castigatio* 105; also Rummel *Erasmus' Annotations* 35–42.

32 for … also was at hand.] Added in *1527*, but see next note.

33 the fourth] First in *1535*; in *1527*, 'this fourth'

34 In this *1527* addition to the text, Erasmus focuses attention on two recently published editions of the New Testament text and passes lightly over manuscripts that he cited in his annotations far more frequently than the published editions. In the third edition he appeals very often to the witness of the *codex aureus*, a manuscript of the Gospels in the possession of the regent Margaret in Mechelen, and to codices of both Gospels and Epistles from the library of St Donatian in Bruges. He makes no mention here of the manuscripts borrowed from Johann von Botzheim, which were important witnesses in the fourth edition. The Aldine Bible, produced in Venice in 1518, was an edition of the Greek text of the entire Bible – the Old Testament Septuagint and the Greek New Testament. Its New Testament readings frequently, but not always, corresponded with those of Erasmus' 1516 text. Cf *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 33 with n167 (for a slightly longer version of which note see ASD IX-4 46 684n); cf also *Contra morosos* paragraph 57 with n157. Erasmus knew of the Aldine Bible while working on his second edition but did not then have access to it; however, he claims he was able to use it, thanks to friends, to restore in the second edition the Greek text of Rev 22:19, a text he had been obliged to construct from the Latin in the first edition; cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei* 2 (Note 243) CWE 72 343 with nn749, 750 and 'New Testament Scholarship' 195 with n757. The Spanish edition is the Complutensian Polyglot Bible, the work of scholars at Alcalá (Latin *Complutum*), Spain, under the supervision of Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros (c 1436–1517), who had become archbishop of Toledo and primate of Spain in 1495, cardinal and inquisitor-general in 1507. The Complutensian Bible was a six-volume edition that included the Old Testament in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, with the Targum of Onkelos (an Aramaic paraphrase of the Pentateuch), and the New Testament in Greek and Latin. Although the New Testament was printed by 1514 and the Old Testament by 1517, the work was not 'offered for sale until 1522' (CEBR II 236), since papal approval awaited the return of a manuscript borrowed from the papal library. See Bentley *Humanists*

the Latin text that were both very old and correct.[35] Not content with this, I analysed and examined the most approved authors, and noted with close attention their readings, their emendations, and their interpretations. When all this material had been collated and evaluated with as much vigilance as I could command, certainly with absolute honesty, I adopted the reading I judged best and placed it in the general pool, but with the understanding that each person exercise his own judgment.[36]

Now, should there be any who fear that, if a change is anywhere introduced, the authority of sacred literature will be called into question, they should know that already for a thousand years the manuscripts, whether Latin or Greek, have not agreed in every respect. Agreement would not, in fact, be possible, given not only the large number of copyists but also[37] their ignorance, carelessness, and indiscretion – not to mention the many alterations made by the semi-educated or, at least, the inattentive. I find certain words removed or inserted by factions, through whose agitation all things were in times past thrown into confusion, especially the factions of the Eastern church,[38] each person altering Scripture in the interest of his own party. Jerome shows clearly in several places that this was done.[39]

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91–111; CWE 56 296 n10, *Contra morosos* nn124 and 298, and 'New Testament Scholarship' 312 with n1302. Also for the manuscripts used by Erasmus for his New Testament see further Ep 384 introduction CWE 3 216–21.

35 Erasmus frequently spoke of two Latin manuscripts in St Paul's, London as 'very old'; cf CWE 56 108–9 with n5 and 'New Testament Scholarship' 28 with n146.

36 A principle commonly asserted in the *Annotations* cf eg CWE 56 19–20, 24, 24 n42, 227. Erasmus makes the point almost immediately in the *Contra morosos*; cf paragraph 2 with nn10 and 11.

37 but also] *verum etiam*, first in *1527*; previously, *sed* 'but'

38 the Eastern church] first in *1527*; previously, 'the East.' Controversies were rife in the Eastern church of the post-Constantinian period, evident most famously in the Arian and Origenist conflicts and also in the intense debates over the nature of Christ and the *theotokos*, ie Mary as the 'God-bearer.'

39 Cf the annotation on 1 John 5:7–8 (*tres sunt qui testimonium dant in coelo*) where Erasmus cites Jerome speaking of biblical manuscripts, 'in which we find faithless [*infidelibus* 'untrustworthy'] translators have often strayed from the true faith' ASD VI-10 544:299–300. In 1520 Erasmus cited the passage (with some skepticism) in *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei 3* (Note 25) CWE 72 405, where 'Jerome's statement' is identified as that of Pseudo-Jerome in *Prologus septem epistolarum canonicarum* PL 29 828–9, and he cited it again in 1522 in *Apologia*

A[40] lesser type of corruption arises whenever a reader inserts something similar from another passage. It is more serious when the reader transfers to the text a note added in the margin by the scholiast. Yet has anything happened to the Christian religion because for many centuries now Jerome has offered one reading, Cyprian another, Hilary another, Ambrose another, Augustine another? Among these authors you will find readings that are not only different but even contradictory, though they agree on the essentials of the Christian faith. Has[41] anything happened to the Greek Orthodox church because they followed the Septuagint, while at the same time frequently recalling the translations of Symmachus, Theodotion, and Aquila? What is one to do when not even the modern text is always consistent?[42] If anyone has doubts about this, he will find additional proof in books printed with marginal notes that indicate the variants,[43] and if this is not enough, he will reach the same conclusion from[44] the commentaries of Bede, Rabanus, and Thomas, from those of Nicholas of Lyra, and from

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*ad annotationes Stunicae* (on 1 John 5:7–8) ASD IX-2 254:453–5, 479–88 (for the *Prologus* as pseudepigraphical see 254:479–88n). Cf *Contra morosos* paragraph 78.

40 A … scholiast.] Added in *1527*

41 Has … Aquila?] Added in *1527*. Jerome in *Prologus in libro Iob* noted that 'the Jewish Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion – Judaizing heretics though they were – had found a place, after the Septuagint, among the Greeks'; Weber 732. Similarly in *Prologus Hieronymi in Isaia propheta* Jerome had noted that the Greeks read the work of these three scholars along with the Septuagint (Weber 1096). Cf *Contra morosos* paragraph 25b. Theodotion, evidently a Jewish proselyte from Ephesus (late second century), provided a translation of the Old Testament that may well have been a revision of an already existing translation; Symmachus, an Ebionite (also late second century), undertook a translation from the Hebrew into idiomatic Greek with some sense of literary style. The translations of both Symmachus and Theodotion were each placed in a column in Origen's *Hexapla*. Aquila, a convert to Judaism (early second century), translated the Old Testament into Greek in a very literal fashion. His translation was apparently known to Symmachus and was used by Origen for the *Hexapla*.

42 In his letter to Henry Bullock (August 1516) Erasmus repeated the point made here that both ancient and 'modern' texts give evidence of variants; cf Ep 456:51–3. He reiterated the observation in *Contra morosos* paragraph 44.

43 that indicate the variants] Added in *1527*. Marginal notes in the *Gloss* occasionally acknowledged variants; indeed, in a very few cases Erasmus' editions of the New Testament from 1522 to 1535 printed a variant in the margin beside the Greek text.

44 from … Thomas] first in 1527; previously, 'from the commentaries of St Thomas.' Cf *Contra morosos* paragraph 43.

the commentaries of Hugh of St Cher.[45] Already[46] in his day Origen complained about puzzling variations in the Gospels.[47] In their public liturgies the Greek church reads one text, the Western church another. About the time of Jerome, some churches were following the Septuagint translation, while some were embracing the new translation made from the original Hebrew.[48] Even later than this, the churches of Gaul were reading one text, the churches of Rome another.[49] Finally, if you inspect the old manuscript

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45 **Bede** (c 672–735), perhaps best known for his *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum* (*Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation*), 'began his works on the Bible with commentaries on Acts, the Catholic Epistles, and Revelation' CWE 44 xv n28; his exegetical work includes commentaries on parts of the Old Testament and the Gospels. He is extensively referenced in Erasmus' annotations on the Catholic Epistles. The commentaries of **Rabanus Maurus**, abbot of Fulda and later archbishop of Mainz (d 856), were largely compilations from the exegetical work of his predecessors; he is infrequently cited by Erasmus in the *Annotations*, but cf the annotation on Acts 2:23 (*praescentia Dei traditum*) where in *1527* he attests a variant. In the *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* Erasmus calls Rabanus a 'man not without learning and honour' CWE 82 102 (cf 102 n349). He is mentioned in the *Ratio* (cf n977) as a theologian who made theological matter 'fit figures and outlines of letters.' **Thomas Aquinas** (ca 1225–74) wrote extensively on Scripture, including commentaries on Matthew and John and the Pauline Epistles, and in his *Catena aurea* offered excerpts from the work of earlier exegetes on the Gospels; cf *Paraclesis* n83; and for Erasmus' evaluation of Thomas, ibidem n97; **Nicholas of Lyra** (d 1349) knew Hebrew and commented on both Testaments. The commentaries of **Hugh of St Cher** (d 1263) 'were intended to update and supplement the existing [*Glossa ordinaria*]' CWE 44 134 n12. For Erasmus' evaluation of these two see 'New Testament Scholarship' 82.

46 Already … Latin.] The remainder of the paragraph was added in *1527*.

47 In *Contra morosos* paragraph 45 (cf n130) Erasmus cites for the same allusion the *Homilies on Matthew* 8 of Origen (ie Pseudo-Origen). The passage is found rather in Origen's *Commentarius in evangelium secundum Matthaeum* 15.14 (Matthew 19:16–30) PG 13 1289–95 (cf especially 1293).

48 A reference apparently to Jerome's translation of the Old Testament from the original Hebrew into Latin; cf *Methodus* n27.

49 A reference specifically to the Psalms. Jerome made three Latin versions of the Psalms. His last was directly from the Hebrew, but it was the first two that found a widespread liturgical use: the Roman Psalter (which survived in Italy until modern times) was the product of Jerome's revision first of the Old Latin in light of the Septuagint; the Gallican Psalter, which was to be incorporated into the Vulgate, was a Latin translation based on the Greek that Jerome emended from the Hebrew text, using Origen's *Hexapla*; it took its name from the fact

codices that were used in those times in public worship, you will scarcely[50] find two that agree with each other. Certainly it is clear that Augustine used manuscripts that were not free from faults. And yet all down through the centuries the authority of Scripture has stood firm. If textual variation in the manuscripts completely deprives the Scriptures of their reliability, then, remember, there is manuscript variation in the Hebrew, in the Greek, and in the Latin.[51]

I ask you what danger arose from St Jerome's restoration of the Old and New Testaments in accordance with the Hebrew and Greek originals for a world already growing old? Some objected at that time, whom he himself answers quite sufficiently in his books.[52] They objected, I think, simply because they did not know those languages. Did the slightest harm come to the Christian religion as a result of his labours? Augustine confesses that the very disagreement in the texts of the manuscripts had been of no small help to him, for what one copy had said not very well another expressed more clearly and correctly – a necessary result, even if fortuitous.[53] What did the majesty of the Gospels lose because Juvencus turned them into an epic poem, or because[54] Arator dared to do the same with the Acts of the Apostles?[55] I

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that 'it was adopted first in Gaul, where an independent liturgy throve in the early centuries of the Christian era' CWE 63 78 n28; cf also CWE 63 xxi and *Contra morosos* paragraphs 21 and 79b.

50 scarcely] First in *1535*; in *1527*, 'not'

51 Cf *Contra morosos* paragraphs 38 and 44.

52 Cf eg Jerome's *Praefatio* to the Gospels, where Jerome undertakes to answer those he suspects will be his detractors – people who call him 'an impious forger, who dared to add to, change, correct the old books'; Weber 1515:8–10. In the preceding sentence Erasmus echoes the language of this preface: 'A pious labour, but a dangerous presumption … to bring back to the freshness of childhood a world growing old' Weber 1515:4–6. Cf also the *Prologus* to the Pentateuch, Weber 3–4.

53 Cf Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 2.12.17. Erasmus cites the passage elsewhere, eg *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae* ASD IX-2 78:362–3 and 115:136–8.

54 or because … Apostles?] Added in *1527*

55 Apostles?] From *1516* to *1522* an additional sentence followed here (with a short omission in *1516*): 'What harm did Divine Scripture suffer because our own Gillis van Delft, a distinguished theologian, turned almost the whole of it into elegiac verse?' In *1516* the words rendered by 'harm did suffer' were omitted, apparently by accident. Erasmus elsewhere appeals to the examples of Juvencus, Arator, and Gillis van Delft in defending his own New Testament scholarship; cf CWE 42 xvii. For Juvencus and van Delft see also Ep 456:93–8 and the much later (1529) *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* CWE 84 78–9 with

have altered some passages not so much to improve the style as to make the text clearer and more accurate. But what was the danger had I changed the whole text into a paraphrase, as[56] Jerome almost did in the Old Testament.[57] For those who are fond of the Vulgate, their edition is still available for them to use – I neither change it nor condemn it; in fact, it is not spoiled by my revision but rendered clearer, purer, and more accurate. Let the Vulgate be the edition that is read in the schools, chanted in the churches, quoted in sermons; no one[58] is standing in the way. I think I can promise that whoever reads my version at home will better understand his own.[59]

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nn389–91. **Juvencus**, an early fourth-century Spanish priest, wrote a poetic paraphrase of the life of Christ based on the Gospels; **Arator**, first half of the sixth century, wrote an epic poem *De actibus apostolorum* that followed more or less closely the book of Acts. For an account of their works see Michael Roberts *Biblical Epic and Rhetorical Paraphrase in Late Antiquity* (Liverpool 1985) 67–76, 87–92. **Gillis van Delft** was a theologian of the Sorbonne, who taught also for some time at Cologne. He made verse paraphrases of the seven penitential psalms and of Paul's Epistle to the Romans; cf Ep 456:98n. His 'elegant style and poetry made him a Renaissance author' CEBR I 382. He died in 1524, which may explain the omission of the reference to him in the editions of 1527 and 1535, although he appears with a brief appraisal in *Ciceronianus* CWE 28 425, first published in 1528. Erasmus alludes again to Juvencus in *Contra morosos* paragraph 56 (cf n153).

56 as … Testament.] Added in *1527*

57 Cf *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* CWE 84 145, where Erasmus refers to Jerome's practice of 'first [quoting] the passage of Scripture,' then giving 'a version that is nothing but a paraphrase.' Some of Jerome's comments in the prologues to his translations invite the reader to think of his biblical translation as a paraphrase, eg the *Prologus* to the book of Kings (Samuel): the reader who is pleased with his work may regard it as a translation, one who is not pleased may read it as a paraphrase (Weber 365); cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 270 with n1131); and the *Prologus* to Isaiah, where Jerome says that he did not attempt to maintain the precise poetic character of the Hebrew, but 'looking to the advantage of the readers marked a new translation with a new kind of writing,' Weber 1096.

58 no one … way.] Added in *1527*. Cf *Contra morosos* paragraph 65 with n177 where Erasmus asserts that he has not changed but improved the Vulgate, which remains available for those who want it.

59 In his letter to Henry Bullock Erasmus echoed the comments made here; cf Ep 456:88–102. He frequently claims that he intended his New Testament for study at home; cf *Contra morosos* n137. One may note also in Jerome's prologues the parallels to some of the themes in this paragraph, eg in *Prologus in libro Paralipomenon* 'Prologue to Chronicles,' where Jerome insisted that his

If the only objection to my work is its novelty, well then, the version that is now old was once new, and this new version, if we permit, will at some time in the future be old. It is the mark of a person altogether inexperienced to value a book by the number of its years and not by judging its contents. I too would wish that in sacred literature nothing was corrupt, nowhere was there any disagreement. And yet, while it is easy to wish for this, it never has been the fact, nor, I think,[60] ever will be.

I[61] wholeheartedly support[62] those who preach the inviolable authority of the divine Scriptures. One who knowingly corrupts them insults the Holy Spirit.[63] I acknowledge this. But the sovereignty of Scripture lies in the originals themselves. Isaiah did not err, nor does anyone try to alter what he wrote. Matthew did not stumble; no one corrects what he recorded. Our concern is with the translators, with the scribes, with the corruptors. But if all authority collapses because of a certain number of corrupt passages, the Holy Spirit ought to have attended the copyists as he did the prophets and evangelists. The Holy Spirit is present everywhere but exerts his force in such a way as to leave some of the work for us to do.[64] That inviolable authority of Scripture stopped with the prophets and apostles or evangelists. But it is the great glory of Scripture that, although re-expressed so often in so many languages, so often mutilated or corrupted by heretics, contaminated in so

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translations, though new, left the old unchanged, and *Prologus in libro Ezrae* 'Prologue to Ezra,' where Jerome requested that the dedicatees use the translation for their private reading and not bring it out for public use; cf Weber 546 and 638.

60 I think] Added in *1527*. Compare this paragraph with *Contra morosos* paragraphs 64 and 65.

61 I … Septuagint.] This and the next paragraph were added in *1527*.

62 'wholeheartedly support': *utroque favemus pollice*, literally, 'give support with both thumbs,' as in Horace *Epistles* 1.18.66; *Adagia* I viii 46 'Thumbs down, thumbs up.'

63 Cf Matt 12:32. The extensive addition of the two paragraphs inserted here in *1527* must to some degree reflect the debate, especially with Béda and Cousturier, over the respective roles of the Holy Spirit and the translator(s) of Scripture in producing the biblical texts. Cf the late (*1535*) additions to the *Contra morosos* on this question, paragraphs 27a–e and 38; 'New Testament Scholarship' 813–14 (Béda) and 820 (Cousturier). The issue was, however, clearly alive in 1518; cf Ep 843:240–66.

64 Cf *Contra morosos* paragraph 27. The principle enunciated here is illustrated in the paraphrase on Acts 18:27, where 'some of the work' belonged to Apollos, in whom 'the Holy Spirit supported an eloquence joined with sacred erudition' CWE 50 115.

many ways by the carelessness of scribes, it nevertheless retains the vigour of eternal truth. So the church, constantly shaken by all the storm winds of adversity, stands firm. But one who has, to the best of his ability, restored to its original integrity what human beings have corrupted serves the Holy Spirit. We shall never lack those who corrupt; accordingly, our efforts to correct must never cease.

Sacred Scripture, therefore, is one thing; what translators have rendered badly, or scribes have corrupted, is another. Again, it is one thing to change what is read in public, another thing either to amend or illuminate a public text with one intended as private.[65] These two things are amazingly confused by certain people who regard themselves as quite the dialecticians. I do not refute the claim of some who say that mysteries are concealed in letters and dots, provided they acknowledge the hyperbole.[66] Otherwise, one would have to drink in Scripture only from the original sources, for whoever translates into a foreign language is compelled to depart completely from the letters and dots. The Jews bandy about some strange interpretations of the names of God, especially the tetragrammaton; Christians likewise of the names of Jesus, but these mysteries are lost in translation.[67] Indeed, the very name of Jesus is written in letters that are quite different in Hebrew from those used by the evangelists and Paul. If a matter so serious lies concealed in

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65 For Erasmus' New Testament as a Bible for private study see n59 above.

66 In the *Moria* (CWE 27 133) Erasmus, less generously, lampoons those who attempt to find mysteries in letters. Alberto Pio, a cabbalist of whose *Responsio paraenetica* Erasmus had received a copy by September 1526 ('New Testament Scholarship' 279 with n1181), exemplified the extravagant interest in the mystic meaning of the 'words and letters' of Scripture; cf *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* and *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* CWE 84 76 with n375 and 263 with n933. Indeed Erasmus himself, in the *1515* preface to the *Annotations,* had recognized the possibility of mystery 'in the very strokes of the letters,' Ep 373:125–7 (cf 'Prefaces and Letters' 787). This extravagant claim had ancient precedent; cf eg Origen CWE 56 156 n39. For 'dots' see n68 below.

67 For Christian speculation over the name of Jesus see the reference to the *Moria* in the previous note. The Tetragrammaton, ie 'four-lettered,' refers to Yahweh as the personal name of God in the Old Testament, spelled with the four capital letters *YHWH*; cf Exod 3:13–15. Cf ABD II 1002–4 'The Divine Name Yaweh' and ABD VI 392–3 'Tetragrammeton in the New Testament.' Erasmus was well aware of the problem of interpreting Hebrew names on the basis of a Greek transliteration; cf the *1519* annotation on John 2:20 (*quadraginta sex annis*), and the discussion of the problem in 1531 between Erasmus and Agostino Steuco, Ep 2465:133–50; cf also the annotation on Rom 1:1 ('Paul') CWE 56 3–4 with n12 and the Translator's Note prefacing the *Paraclesis*, 397–9.

points and dots,[68] why did the apostles, who knew Hebrew, not hand down to us that most sacred name in the same characters as it had in Hebrew, since they so frequently insert it into their writings? But when I pressed this argument upon someone, he replied that Jesus' name is written in a corrupt form and so read in all the books of the New Testament.[69] If this were true, the Catholic church would have groped through all these centuries in the darkness of a monumental error! Rather, it is more probable that the Greeks and Romans commonly pronounced the name in this way, and the apostles used the pronunciation they heard with no concern over letters and dots. In fact, these same evangelists and apostles were not so scrupulous in citing the witness of the Scriptures, sometimes following the Septuagint, sometimes borrowing from the original Hebrew, at other times giving whatever meaning they chose, agreeing totally with neither the Hebrew nor the Septuagint.[70]

Now what good is it to refute those who, out of an ignorance that is matched only by their effrontery, are always exclaiming that it is an intolerable crime for anyone to correct the Gospels, amend[71] the Magnificat, alter the Lord's Prayer? What an outburst! – hardly worthy of a stable boy, never

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68 'Points' here are, presumably, the vowel signs placed in most cases below Hebrew letters. 'Dots': *apicibus*, apparently reflecting Matt 5:18; cf the annotation on the verse (*iota unum aut apex*), where Erasmus explains the Vulgate *iota* as the Hebrew *iod* but is uncertain about the precise meaning of *apex*. Cf the expression 'letters and dots' just above with n66.

69 The incident is unidentified, but see the annotation on Matt 1:16 (*qui vocatur Christus*), where in a *1519* addition Erasmus refers to certain scholars who believe that in Matt 1:16 the name *Iesu* in the Hebrew (one assumes that Matthew was originally written in Hebrew; cf n74 below) was different from the name of *Iesu* (Joshua) in the books of Joshua, Haggai, and Zechariah, and was originally written like the name of 'the ineffable God' (ie the Tetragrammaton *YHWH*) with an *s* (Hebrew *sin*) 'interposed.' (Erasmus wished there were solid arguments for a view so pleasing to Christian ears!) Cf Chaim Wirszubski *Pico della Mirandola's Encounter with Jewish Mysticism* (Cambridge MA 1989) appendix 7, 218 (on the name of Jesus), who notes Johann Reuchlin's pentagram, which was the Tetragrammaton with the Hebrew letter *shin* inserted between *H* and *W*.

70 Erasmus reflects here his intention, clearly stated in *1516* in the preface to his *Annotations*, Ep 373:72–83 (cf 'Prefaces and Letters' 785), to trace the sources of the Old Testament quotations in the New Testament; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 42–3.

71 amend … Prayer.] Added in *1527*. These apparently widespread charges against Erasmus' New Testament scholarship echo through Erasmus' work for many years, eg in Ep 456:83–7 (1516), Ep 948:99–119 (1519), Ep 1062:92–4 (1520 and 1521; cf CWE 43 290), Ep 1196:423–5 (1521), Ep 2045:40–2 (1528); also in the

mind a theologian. Let[72] not the theological profession become angry with me because I mention a theologian. They should reserve their anger for those who, though theologians of the first rank, have been proclaiming, and are still proclaiming, such things in a most provocative manner in ordinary lectures and in sermons.[73] But back to the point. Is it right for any fool to corrupt the Gospel books, and will it be wrong for someone to restore what is corrupted, especially a man who (not to speak too arrogantly) is in this kind of study neither careless nor unpractised – especially when he has taken into account so many Greek and Latin manuscripts and so many distinguished authors?

To me the weight of argument makes it overwhelmingly probable that the whole of the New Testament was written in Greek, not Latin. Certainly, if one excepts the Gospel according to Matthew and the one Epistle to the Hebrews, there is no controversy about the rest.[74] So anyone who proposes to alter what the apostles and evangelists wrote would be justly criticized for 'correcting' the Gospels, but not one who, in accordance with pontifical decrees,[75] makes use of the Greek sources and the judgment of venerable interpreters to restore in good faith what was either corrupted by scribes or ineptly translated in the Latin manuscripts, since it was in Greek that the apostles wrote. But why labour the point, when St Jerome in several letters plays the advocate for my case; not even he, when he had laboured at a quite

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annotations on Matt 6:12 (*et dimitte*; *1519* addition) and on Luke 1:48 (*humilitatem ancillae*; *1527* addition); and in the colloquy 'The Sermon' (*1531*) CWE 40 940–53. Cf also *Contra morosos* paragraph 20 with n61.

72 Let … point.] Added in *1527*

73 Cf the witnesses cited in n71.

74 As Erasmus notes, the point seems incontrovertible, but he observes in his annotation on Rom 1:7 ('to all who are in Rome') that some people think Paul wrote to the Romans in Latin. The view that Matthew was written in Hebrew was held from very early times; cf Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.16 and Jerome *De viris illustribus* 3.1–3. In the annotation on Matt 1:2 (*genuit Isaac*) Erasmus expresses doubt about this opinion but does not explicitly deny it. Jerome attests the view that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written in Hebrew; *De viris illustribus* 5.10–11. In the Argument to his *Paraphrase* on the Epistle to the Hebrews, Erasmus assumes that the recipients of the letter are believers in Jerusalem – Jews it would appear (CWE 44 214) – but in his annotations on the Epistle he repeatedly observes that the Old Testament is cited from the Greek Septuagint.

75 Cf *Methodus* n28.

similar task, escaped calumny.[76] If his revision were extant, either I would not have needed to undertake this task, or there would have been something for me to follow.

So I ask you, good reader, that when you come upon some alteration of mine, you do not immediately reject and condemn it, letting the taste and flavour of the customary reading influence your judgment, as though anything different is necessarily bad.[77] That would at one and the same time cheat me of the acclaim I deserve and you of the benefit of my work. You should first compare my version with the Greek: to facilitate this I have added the Greek text, placing it in an adjacent column.[78] Then consider whether I have not expressed the Greek more faithfully, more clearly, and more fully than the old Translator. Here again, I should not be dragged into court if the translation is not completely word for word; such a translation cannot possibly be made however hard you try. If it is considered wrong to deviate at all from the letters and syllables of the Greek, why has the Translator everywhere dared to do so, sometimes when he was neither compelled by necessity nor encouraged by the improvement it offered, but was simply unconcerned and half-asleep as though it were a matter of small importance.[79] But if it is legitimate, as it certainly is, to depart[80] sometimes from a letter or a syllable, and if you find that I have rendered ideas with greater accuracy than the Translator, then do not condemn it because it is new, but embrace it because it is more correct. After that, if the comparison of my version with the Greek does not satisfy you, do not immediately pronounce the verdict. Consult my *Annotations*; perhaps they will satisfy you either through the authority of the witnesses cited or through the arguments adduced. Sometimes one finds that there is a variant reading or that several senses can be taken from the same

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76 Cf the reference in *Methodus* n23 for Jerome's 'advocacy' of Erasmus' case. Jerome complains about the calumnies directed against him in eg the prologues to the Pentateuch and Job; Weber 3 and 731.

77 Cf the similar comment in Jerome's preface to the Gospels, Weber 1515. The image appears also in *Contra morosos*, cf paragraph 65 n178.

78 column.] In *1527* only, a further sentence was added here: 'Now I have added also the old edition that has until the present been accepted for public use.' For the Vulgate added in the edition of 1527 see 'New Testament Scholarship' 291–2 with n1238.

79 For these criticisms of the Translator see 'New Testament Scholarship' 63–4. The Translator's faults are abundantly illustrated in 'Errors in the Vulgate' 871–948.

80 to depart … syllable] Added in *1535*; previously the idea expressed by the words had to be supplied by the reader from the preceding sentence. For Erasmus' 'freedom' in translation see 'New Testament Scholarship' 124 with n534.

words. I first put forward a single reading only – in fact, I could not have done otherwise.[81] But in my *Notes*[82] I record various readings, either indicating what I think best or leaving to the judgment[83] of the reader which one he prefers to follow. There are some annotations in which the Vulgate or the Ambrosian[84] reading is preferred to that in the Greek codices. And yet where all the Greek copies agreed, I accommodated the Latin to the Greek (since it was not open to me to alter the latter), and I did so to avoid discrepancies between the Latin and the Greek texts, for they were added for this very purpose.[85] But I discuss this in the scholia.[86] I find that the Greeks take over certain things from established practice, like the concluding ascription in the Lord's Prayer,[87] just as we add the *gloria patri* at the end of the Psalms.[88] I have

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81 Ie Erasmus could offer only one reading in the text; he could note variants in the annotations.

82 '*Notes*': *Annotamentis*; just above *Annotationes*; both words are capitalized in *1535*, referring evidently to the *Annotations* as a published work; neither is capitalized in *1527*, with reference apparently to the notes in the *Annotations*. I have capitalized both, following the latest lifetime edition, though this somewhat strains the pronoun 'they' that follows '*Annotations*.'

83 the judgment … follow.] First in *1535*; previously, 'your judgment which one you prefer to follow'

84 Erasmus generally did not distinguish between Ambrose, fourth-century bishop of Milan, and Ambrosiaster, the anonymous exegete of the late fourth century. He believed that Ambrose knew Greek and was therefore a valuable witness to the authentic biblical text. See 'New Testament Scholarship' 62 with n252.

85 Erasmus seems to have begun his work on the New Testament by writing notes and translations for some expressions and later, no doubt with encouragment from others, decided to 'add' the Latin and Greek texts; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 27–8 with nn145, 147; and de Jonge *Novum Testamentum* 400–1.

86 'Scholia': *scholiis*, ie the annotations; cf just below 'brief notes': *commentariolis*; and 'supporting notes': *annotamenta*; also n82 above. Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 50 with nn214, 217.

87 Prayer] *precatione* first in *1519*; in *1516*, *oratione*. A similar change is made elsewhere in *1519*; cf the annotation on 1 Tim 2:1 (*primum omnium*), where *oratio* and *orationes* (*1516*) were replaced with *deprecatio* and *precationes* (*1519–35*). To his paraphrase on the Lord's Prayer (1523) Erasmus gave the title *Precatio dominica*, although distinguished writers of the past had spoken of the *Oratio dominica*. Erasmus explained his preference for *precatio* in *Modus orandi Deum* CWE 70 154. Cf further the brief comment in *Supputatio* ASD IX-5 398:268–9.

88 See the annotation on Matt 6:13 (*quia tuum est regnum*), where Erasmus explains that the words 'For thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever, Amen!' found in all his Greek manuscripts are an addition to the evangelist's text and are found there because they were customarily added in liturgical

not pruned these from the text, but I point out in brief notes that they are additions. When, as I often find, a reader inserts from certain passages what was missing in another similar place, the error is less dangerous; but this too I have been careful to point out.[89]

Accordingly, I offer this reading of the text not as though everything is certain and beyond doubt, but because from my emended version, along with the supporting notes, the attentive and vigilant reader cannot but be considerably helped. There will be many things here that someone will think should be dismissed as frivolous minutiae. But anyone who compares, evaluates, studies, and interprets sacred literature will discover for himself that there is no small value in these minutiae. Besides, I shall readily be forgiven for having pursued such small details by anyone who reflects that authors of the first rank have stumbled over stones of this kind, sometimes even slipping into an embarrassing blunder, certainly Hilary himself, Augustine, Ambrose,[90] and among the moderns the erudite Thomas Aquinas, not to mention others.[91] In carrying out this task it was sometimes necessary for me to disagree with such authors. While I have always done this openly, I have never been abusive. I have never even been particularly severe on those whose brazen impudence and arrogant ignorance hardly deserved such courtesy. Even if I had attacked these people more boldly, I could still

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practice, just as the chanting of the Psalms was traditionally concluded with the words, 'Glory to the Father, and to the Son, etc.' Normally the ascription was not added to the Lord's Prayer in Vulgate Bibles. Erasmus, following his Greek text, had added it in his New Testament but from *1519* printed it in small roman letters to indicate the textual difficulty; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 126 with n537. Nevertheless, both Lee and López Zúñiga challenged the position he took in his annotation; cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* (Note 4) CWE 72 90–2 and *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae* ASD IX-2 92:641–56. A *1522* addition to the annotation responds to both critics.

89 Erasmus refers to scribal assimilation, a phenomenon often observed in textual criticism; for examples see the annotations on Matt 5:43 (*diligite inimicos vestros*) and on Rom 9:25 ('and her that has not obtained mercy, her that has obtained mercy') CWE 56 268–9 with n19.

90 Ambrose] Added in *1527*

91 Erasmus offered a much more extensive defence of his attention to minutiae in his preface to the *Annotations*, Ep 373:84–149 ('Prefaces and Letters' 785–8). Cf also *Contra morosos* paragraphs 80–82i, as well as paragraph 84, where in *1519* Erasmus furnished a long list of minutiae that had been annotated by Augustine and Jerome. For the 'shameful mistakes' of the great exegetes of the past see *Methodus* nn29 and 36, *Ratio* 499 with n51, and *Contra morosos* paragraphs 27h and 81.

find vindication among all the learned in that line from Plautus: 'A curse deserved is a blessing, not a curse.'[92] However, I have preferred to consider what was worthy of me rather than what they deserved. I had intended to conceal their blunders entirely, but everywhere the books written by such petty practitioners[93] were being thumbed by every hand and read and quoted like oracles. Again I did so not with zealous thoroughness but only in some places here and there, so that those who have swept into their notes (by a white rule, as they say)[94] whatever they found in such writers, no matter how it was expressed or introduced, should in the future be less trusting; or at least that those who so highly esteem these authors should understand that even esteemed authors have made conspicuous[95] mistakes and fallen into some exceedingly childish delusions because of their ignorance of the things I mentioned. Otherwise, if I had wanted to pursue everything in their books that could either be laughed at[96] or condemned, I would truly have faced an *Iliad* of troubles[97] (to quote the Greek proverb) – indeed a single *Iliad* would not have been enough to refute their remarks. But with respect to the others who, besides being commended by their erudition, are distinguished by the holiness of their lives, far from making a virulent attack on them, I have often snatched at any excuse to make light of an error or excuse it or conceal it.[98] People should not be angry at me for some mistake Augustine or Thomas made, when the error is too obvious to be concealed. Let them lay

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92 *Curculio* 513–14

93 by such petty practitioners] Added in *1535*. To judge from the comments in the annotations, these men of 'brazen impudence and arrogant ignorance' would be well represented by Hugh of St Cher and Nicholas of Lyra; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 82–3 with n336.

94 Cf *Adagia* I v 88, defining 'white rule': 'This means "without selection, making no distinctions"'; Erasmus continues by quoting Gellius, who applied the image to those people who 'read eagerly and widely and swept together everything they came across without discrimination.'

95 conspicuous] First in *1535*; previously 'shameful.' For 'shameful mistakes' see n91 above.

96 laughed at] Reading *rideri* (with all editions) for *videri* 'seen' (Holborn)

97 '*Iliad* of troubles': Erasmus cites the proverb in Greek; see *Adagia* I iii 26, where Erasmus explains the phrase as 'the simultaneous occurrence of the greatest catastrophes.'

98 conceal it.] Reading *tegam* (with all editions) for *legam* in Holborn. López Zúñiga cited this passage, which he interpreted as a promise not to attack esteemed authors such as Jerome; cf *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae* ASD IX-2 107:964–108:973; elsewhere López Zúñiga, referring to this passage as a promise, called

the blame on ignorance of the languages or, if they prefer, on the age in which those writers lived.[99]

It was to the advantage of students that such things should not be entirely concealed. Not that I think myself more keen sighted than these eminent men, but perhaps in some passages I was more attentive, or perhaps I was better equipped with the valuable resources of language; certainly I was in a better position than Aquinas, who knew only Latin, and not[100] even that very well – he held that *luxuria* [self-indulgence] properly belonged to *libido* [lust]! All these, inasmuch as they were always most zealous in their pursuit of truth are, I am sure, more indulgent towards me, especially because I have made their books somewhat freer from error.

What is tinier than a comma? But such a little thing can give rise to a heretical interpretation, as Aurelius Augustine shows in *On Christian Doctrine* book 3, citing as an example this passage in John: 'In the beginning … the Word was with God, and God was [ie existed]' [1:1], thus placing the period after 'was.' Then there follows, 'This Word was in the beginning with God' [1:1–2].[101] This reading he terms heretical for it was the reading adopted by those who denied that the Word of God was God. Another example is

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Erasmus a *fidefragius* 'faith breaker'; cf ibidem 174:184–6. Frans Titelmans also strongly objected to Erasmus' 'disparagement' of both ancient and medieval exegetes; cf eg Ep 1837A:66–84 and *Responsio ad Collationes* CWE 73 258–61.

99 In the annotation on Rom 1:4 ('who was predestined') CWE 56 10 Erasmus imputes the exegetical limitations of Thomas to the age in which he lived and the absence of 'good literature.' See also Erasmus' defence of Thomas in *Apologia ad Fabrum* CWE 83 18–19; and Lefèvre's response in his *disputatio* on Erasmus' *1516* annotation on Heb 2:7, where Lefèvre likewise attributes Thomas' exegetical limitations to the times in which he lived and the absence of 'good literature' ASD IX-3 220:466–70.

100 and not…*libido*] Added in *1527*. See the annotation on Eph 5:18 (*in quo est luxuria*), where Erasmus refers to Thomas' explanation of *luxuria* as *libido*. Erasmus' discussion of Thomas' interpretation becomes a major *1522* addition to the annotation; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 209 with n809. Erasmus concludes the annotation with the observation: 'I am not censuring Thomas, but I am very sorry for those who learn nothing else, and I am not so unhappy with myself for having spent less time than they in writers of this sort.'

101 Cf Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 3.2.3. The text of John 1:1–2 (here abbreviated) is usually punctuated, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This [ie the Word] was in the beginning with God …' The punctuation cited in the text above avoids a direct equation of the Word and God, a reading that accommodated the Arian heresy, which claimed that the Word was not fully equal with God, inasmuch as the Word

found in the Epistle of St Paul to the Romans, 'Who will bring any charge against God's elect?' [8:33]. The sentences that follow this quotation, unless read as questions, give a sense that is not only heretical but also[102] downright blasphemous – as though in reply to the question asked above you answer, 'God, who justifies.' Then, 'Who is to condemn?' And to this again you reply, 'Christ Jesus, who died' [8:34].[103] Augustine also took offence at the ambiguity of Paul's language when he says, 'The foolishness of God is wiser than men' [1 Cor 1:25 VG]. Augustine prefers that the passage be translated, 'The foolishness of God is wiser than that of a man,' because otherwise it would be uncertain whether 'men' is in the dative or the ablative case.[104] So great a man as he commented at length on these problems and others quite like them – problems it takes no trouble to notice, even if no one were to point them out. What if he had read a text wherein I had exposed and removed so many hideous blunders, had scattered the profound darkness of so many obscurities, had restored to their proper meaning so many passages rendered not just ambiguously but absurdly – would he not have embraced this work of mine with both arms?[105]

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was a creation of God; cf CWE 56 247 n6 and *Contra morosos* paragraph 82. Cf the problem Erasmus addressed in the construction of John 1:3–4, 'New Testament Scholarship' 302 with n1270.

102 also] Added in *1527*

103 Cf the discussion of this passage in the annotation on Rom 8:33 ('who will make accusation against the elect of God'), where Erasmus argues for the construction he adopts here. In the first four editions of the *Annotations* Erasmus had said that 'printed editions' read the passage 'falsely, indeed with insolence towards Christ' – a statement removed from the edition of 1535.

104 Cf Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 2.13.20. In the Greek, 'men' is in the genitive case and as such could be read as either a genitive of possession, 'wiser than that of men,' or a genitive of comparison, 'wiser than men.' The Vulgate correctly understood the Greek genitive as one of comparison and translated with the corresponding Latin ablative construction. In Latin, however, the ablative plural of men, *hominibus*, has the same form as the dative, so that the phrase could be understood in the sense, 'The foolishness of God is wiser for men.' Erasmus translated (from *1522*), 'God's folly is wiser than human beings'; cf NRSV 'God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom.' Erasmus offers a fuller discussion in the annotation on 1 Cor 1:25 (*quod stultum est Dei*).

105 'With both arms': *utrisque manibus*, literally, 'with both hands'; for the expression see *Adagia* I viii 46. See also Ep 1171:74 and the reference there to *Adagia* I ix 16.

I have annotated some things with such brevity that unless you compare my brief annotation with the passage itself, you may not notice what I wanted you to observe. Certainly, the same observation appears in a number of places, deliberately so for the benefit of the reader who is liable to forget or who shirks the hard work of research. I also have a real fear that, just as many will take exception to the book's novelty, so there will be some on the other side who will be unhappy that anything at all agrees with the old translation. Some approve of nothing that is different, others think unscholarly anything that does not completely contradict and disagree. Again, a somewhat purer Latinity offends some, in particular those who judge nothing cogently argued unless it abounds in monstrous solecisms. Others, on the contrary, disdain anything that does not reflect that Ciceronian polish.[106] In this work I have not aspired to eloquence; at the same time I have not rejected an elegant expression when it was available. God is not offended by solecisms, but neither does he delight in them. He hates a haughty eloquence, I admit, but he hates much more an arrogant and conceited bumbling. I tolerate their stammering; let them in turn put up with my middling powers of expression.

But to make an end at last! I freely admit that there are a great many things that I could have treated in a more scholarly fashion. I do not deny that in some places I fell asleep out of weariness. At the same time, the facts themselves, if I am not mistaken, will show that after Lorenzo Valla, to whom good letters are indebted not only in this field, and after Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples, foremost in every virtue and in literature,[107] I have been occupied in this business neither without cause nor without result. Farewell, dear reader, and if you desire anything further, look for it in the preface to the *Annotations*.[108]

End of the *Apologia*

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106 Cf the Introductory Note to 'Solecisms' in 'Errors in the Vulgate' 872–4, and *Contra morosos* paragraphs 6–19. On 'Ciceronian polish' see Erasmus' late evaluation in Ep 3043 (August 1535) cited in 'New Testament Scholarship' 388 with n1669. The discussion here finds a broader context in the *Ciceronianus* (1528); cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 321 with n1357 and 329 with n1409.

107 For Erasmus' early perception of the relation of his work to that of Valla and Lefèvre d'Etaples see the correspondence between Maarten van Dorp and him, Epp 304:97–101, 131–8 (September 1514, Dorp) and 337:877–919 (May 1515, Erasmus). For his early evaluation of both of these exegetes see 'New Testament Scholarship' 83–5.

108 The reference is to the preface of 1515, Ep 373 ('Prefaces and Letters' 781–92).

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# A SYSTEM OR METHOD OF ARRIVING BY A SHORT CUT AT TRUE THEOLOGY BY DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM

*Ratio seu methodus compendio perveniendi ad veram theologiam per Des. Erasmum Roterodamum*

introduced, translated, and annotated by

ROBERT D. SIDER

Portrait of Albert of Brandenburg, dedicatee of the *Ratio verae theologiae*
Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna

The origin and development of the *Ratio verae theologiae* have been described in the essay on Erasmus' 'New Testament Scholarship,' but a brief review here of salient points made there may be useful. The *Ratio* was drafted, it was suggested,[1] in the autumn of 1518, and sent to Froben for publication with the final pieces of the New Testament of 1518/1519. Before its incorporation into the New Testament of 1519, the *Ratio* was published separately by the Martens Press in Louvain in the autumn of 1518, with a dedication to Albert of Brandenburg (Ep 745). Although Froben would be publishing the *Ratio* with the New Testament, he took advantage of the time available and the copy in hand to publish the *Ratio* in January separately from the New Testament, an edition he reprinted in April. The *Ratio* sent to Froben for publication with the New Testament did not, of course, include a dedication. When, therefore, Froben published the *Ratio* separately, Beatus Rhenanus took advantage of the situation to contribute a letter dated the 'ides of March,' dedicating the work to Johannes Fabri, at that time vicar-general of Constance.[2]

Beatus' letter, if not of great import, reveals his genial character and for that reason deserves a passing note. Beatus underscored the inaugural image of the *Ratio* and explained his reason for the dedication to Fabri: We need a map when we set out on a journey to assure us of arrival at our destination without error, and always, clearly, the shortest way is the best way. This is especially true in theology, where to wander is almost unforgivable. Our dear common friend Erasmus has now greatly enriched and developed his proposal for a true system of theology. I dedicate this new work to you because of your competence in theology, your love for Erasmus, and your kindness to me.

In April Fabri expressed to Erasmus (Ep 953) in very diplomatic terms his appreciation; in May Erasmus responded (Ep 976) with some embarrassment, that the *Ratio* had already been dedicated to Albert. A later edition of the *Ratio* carried a new dedication to Albert (Ep 1365), replacing the original dedication (Ep 745). I may briefly note here that in the Martens edition (1518) the letter of Albert of Brandenburg to Erasmus, asking Erasmus to write a book on the 'Lives of the Saints' preceded Erasmus' dedicatory letter to Albert.[3] It became the general practice in the separate editions to append these two letters as a preface to the *Ratio*, though the separate edition

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1 Cf 'New Testamant Scholarship' 102 n423.
2 Cf Epp 745 introduction and 976 n18.
3 Epp 661 (13 September 1517) and 745 (22 December 1517).

dedicated by Beatus Rhenanus to Johannes Fabri was, of course, prefaced by Rhenanus' letter.

Although the *Ratio* of 1518/1519 incorporated most of the *Methodus* of 1516, it went so far beyond the *Methodus* that it was essentially a new work. The fairly straightforward discussion of hermeneutics in the *Methodus* became in the *Ratio* not only much more elaborate but also more sensitively nuanced. Where the *Methodus* had spoken against the practice of the accommodation of Scripture to the secular will, the *Ratio* through its memorable images of the 'time periods' and the 'circles' acknowledged the need for limited accommodation, an accommodation practised, however, with a creative recognition of the circumstances that validated it. Where the *Methodus* had spoken of the theologian's need for grammar and the liberal arts, the *Ratio* introduced the interpreter to the tropes that must be recognized in Scripture if it is to be read fruitfully. Where the *Methodus* had spared only a couple pages to consider the 'whole course and circle of Christ's life,' the *Ratio* painted on an extended canvas a complex portrait of Christ, drawing the image by extensive and yet detailed reference to the Gospels, and in this way guiding the reader to find in the New Testament the historical Christ as a person still living in its pages. Where the *Methodus* left us somewhat uncertain about the meaning and manner of 'philosophizing' in Scripture, the *Ratio* exemplifies and demonstrates the import of this ambiguous term.

Thus the 1518/1519 *Ratio* placed the discussion of method in scriptural interpretation on an essentially new plane. There were further editions in 1520, 1522, and 1523, but these would not be transformative in the same manner as the 1518/1519 edition transformed the *Methodus* into a virtually new work. Nevertheless, major additions in 1520 greatly augmented the 1519 edition. In particular, to the extensive review of gospel literature an impressive review of the epistolary and especially Pauline literature was added in 1520, possibly reflecting the presence of apostolic literature in Erasmus' thought as he was progressing with his intensive programme of paraphrasing the Epistles in 1518 and 1519. Criticism of church and society with an implied demand for reform was both more extensive and intensive than in 1518/1519, and crucial theological themes like faith and charity, well established in the earlier edition, were probed more deeply in 1520. The additions of 1522 and 1523 only modestly enlarged the respective text of its preceding edition – by about 5 per cent. The additions were 'chiefly illustrative and explanatory, reiterating and emphasizing points already made.'[4] But one

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4 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 189.

very significant addition of 1523 is easily noted: an extensive discussion on the validity of ecclesiastical tenets on indissoluble marriage, a response to discussion on Erasmus' proposal for the reconsideration of divorce, proposals put forward with lengthy and determined argumentation in the *1519* annotation on 1 Corinthians 7:39 (*liberata est a lege, cui autem vult, nubat*).

The *Ratio* did not escape the watchful eyes of Erasmus' critics; indeed, almost from the time of the *Ratio*'s first publication to nearly the end of Erasmus' life, critics found reasons to protest. Early in 1519 Jacobus Latomus, ostensibly attacking a publication by Petrus Mosellanus of Leipzig, disputed an underlying presupposition of the *Ratio*, that languages and the liberal arts are a necessary prerequisite for the properly trained theologian. In 1525 Pierre Cousturier denied the fundamental claim implied in the title of the work, that a short cut to theological training through knowledge of the biblical languages was superior to the traditional method of the painstaking perusal of commentaries. Alberto Pio in his *XXIII Libri* picked away at various comments in the *Ratio*: statements for example on the primacy of Peter, on rituals and the sacraments, on the comparison of 'our' righteousness to the filthy rags of a woman's menstrual flow. And in 1534 Martin Luther in his letter to Nikolaus von Amsdorf took umbrage at the image of the circle in the *Ratio* – though the reference may rather have been to the representation of Christ's life as self-consistent.[5]

The Martens Press published the work (along with the Arguments that Erasmus had composed in the autumn of 1518) under the title *Ratio seu methodus compendio perveniendi ad veram theologiam per Des. Erasmum Roterodamum* 'A System or Method of Arriving by a Short Cut at True Theology by Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam.' It was, however, frequently published under a shortened title, *Ratio seu compendium verae theologiae* 'A System or a Compendium of True Theology.' In the introduction (xv–xvii) Holborn gives the shorter title for the Froben editions of January and April 1519, the longer title for the Schoeffer edition of May 1519. Subsequent editions extend the longer title further to indicate revision and improvement: in *1520*, 'carefully revised by the author'; in *1522*, 'for the last time amended and enriched by the author himself'; in the 1523 Alopecius edition, 'for the last time amended and enriched by the author himself, with very careful emendation and a new and elegant preface' (Ep 1365). We should note further, however, that in

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5 For the extended title of Alberto Pio's book and its English translation see 'New Testament Scholarship' 336 with n1444; for Luther's objection see ibidem 342 with n1470.

many early editions the upper margin of the pages of the text carried only the very short and simple title, *Ratio verae theologiae* 'System of True Theology,' as it is cited in the table of contents in this volume. When reference is made to the work in Erasmus' writings, the title may be adapted or abbreviated, and is often designated simply as the *Methodus*, but elsewhere there is considerable variation: in Ep 901:28–9 (1518) 'system of theological study' (Allen Ep 901:24–5 *ratio studii theologici*), in the *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* 'a method or compendium of true theology' (*methodus sive compendium verae theologiae)*, in the *Apologia adversus monachos* 'system of true theology' (*ratio verae theologiae*).[6] In the translation that follows I adopt various English terms for the Latin *ratio*: 'system,' 'principles,' 'method.'

During Erasmus' lifetime and beyond, the *Ratio* seems to have been a publication success. The separate editions were generally published bound with other similar works of piety and religious instruction authored by Erasmus, most frequently the *Paraclesis*. In 1519 Froben published the *Ratio* with the *Paraclesis* and the *Paraphrase on Romans*; M. Lotther in Leipzig published it with the *Paraclesis* and the Arguments. In 1523 the work appeared with the *Virginis et martyris comparatio*.[7] In 1555 the *Ratio* was published in Cologne with Erasmus' *Precatio pro pace ecclesiae*. Subsequent decades saw translations, particularly in Dutch and German, as well as new editions, among the most notable of which must be counted the edition included in the great *Opera omnia* (Leiden 1703–6, LB), but it is also worthy of note that the distinguished biblical scholar and theologian J.S. Semler published an edition at Halle in 1782 (cf Ferdinand van der Haeghen *Bibliotheca Erasmiana: Répertoire des oeuvres d'Érasme* [Nieuwkoop 1961; repr of 1893 ed] 168).

For the translation below I have followed the text of Holborn (cf Works Frequently Cited). The Holborns found that the text printed in the *Novum Testamentum* (Basel: Froben, March 1519) was identical to the original text printed by the Martens Press in November 1518, and was thus justifiably used as their base text. An edition printed in Mainz (May 1519) by J. Schoeffer offered a few readings that differed from those of the Froben 1519 edition; significant changes are registered in the translation below as *Schoeffer 1519*. Two separate editions published by Froben in 1520 (February and March)[8] are remarkable, as I have indicated, for the very large additions to the text of 1519; but where they follow the text of 1519, they seldom differ from it. The

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6 Cf respectively LB IX 769D and 1077E.
7 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 222 with n886.
8 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship 185 with n724.

edition of 1522 was published in June by Froben with some additions to the text of 1520. No copy of the edition published in 1523 by Michaël Hillen in Antwerp has been found; the Holborns therefore collated the text published by H. Alopecius (Cologne: December 1523) in a volume to which was added the brief *Virginis et martyris comparatio* mentioned just above.[9] I note here that LB V follows the text of the 1522 edition and does not, therefore, include the *1523* additions.

References to the Vulgate are normally to the edition of Weber (cf Works Frequently Cited), occasionally to three others: the Vulgate published with the *Gloss* by Petri and Froben, 1498; the text that appears in the 1527 edition of Erasmus' New Testament (cited as the 1527 Vulgate); and the Clementine edition of 1592 (corrected 1598), the eventual result of the authorization in 1546 by the Council of Trent of the production of a standard Latin text of the Scriptures. For the Greek text, I cite as the 'preferred reading' the text of modern critical editions such as that of the United Bible Society (Greek New Testament, 5th edition, 2014). Translations from the Vulgate, other than my own, have been taken from the Douay-Rheims Bible (Richard Challoner's revision; DV).

RDS

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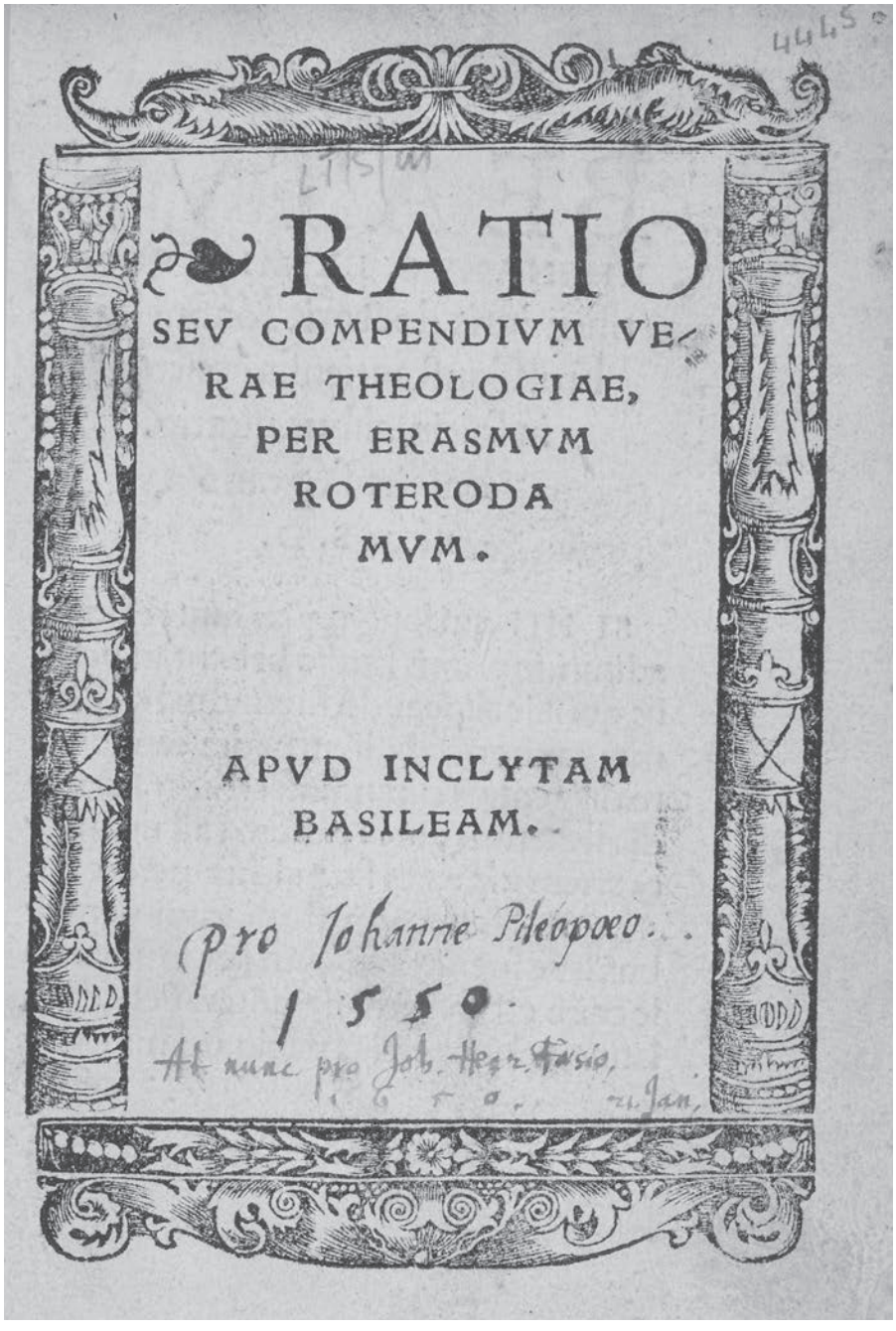
9 For the identity of the edition cf Ep 1341A:788–9 with n219 and ibidem 1579–80; also Ep 1365 introduction, which adopts a conjecture by Allen Ep 1365 introduction, a conjecture that the Holborns did not find persuasive (XVII n1).




Title page of the *Ratio*, Froben 1519
Bodleian Library, University of Oxford (Shelf mark Vet D 1 f. 78)

# BEATVS

RHENANVS, EXIMIO PONtificiq; iuris doctori, Ioanni Fabro, Constantiensis episcopi in spiritualibus uicario, Basilienſiq; canonico. S. D.

SI HII qui longinquas sunt regiones adituri, in primis studio habent, ut uel ex ijs qui illic aliquando fuerint, uel ex Cosmographorũ tabulis iter addiscant, quanto diligentius curandum est liberalia studia sectaturis, ut breuissima ad unã quãq; artem uia cuiq; sit pulchre perspecta. Atq; in alijs quidem studiorum generibus leue fuerit, obliquum iter in ijsse, quale enim est tandem flagitium uel minus latine, uel inornatius paulo, uel minꝰ dialectice

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First page of the letter of Beatus Rhenanus, dedicating the *Ratio* to Johannes Fabri, 1519
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# A SYSTEM OR METHOD OF ARRIVING BY A SHORT CUT AT TRUE THEOLOGY BY DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM[1]

When I was first about to publish my revised version of the New Testament,[2] I had taken the trouble to add, as certain friends of mine had requested, a sort of method and system for the study of theology. It was indeed brief but sufficiently copious, I thought at the time, for the preface of a work, for I was afraid that it should appear to be not a preface but a second work added to the first. Even if this reason had not motivated me, the speed with which the work was already hastening to an end demanded brevity.[3] Now I shall do the same work over again, but somewhat more expansively, and I shall arrange it in such a way that this piece can, if one likes, be added as a preface; otherwise it can be read separately. I shall, no doubt, imitate hosts who, parsimoniously

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1 Hoffmann (*Rhetoric and Theology* 156 n100) indicates that the phrase *ratio seu methodus* 'a system or method' adapts a standard rhetorical idiom, *ratio et via*, used by the rhetoricians to refer to the principles of a subject; the idiom is variously translated in the Loeb Classical Library: 'outline and method' (Cicero *De inventione* 1.4.8), 'principles and method' (Cicero *De oratore* 1.25.113), 'general lines and method' (Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 5.1.3). For *Methodus*, a Latinization of the Greek compound *μέθοδος* (*ὁδός* 'road,' 'way'), cf *Methodus* n1; and for the word in the Renaissance see W.P.D. Wightman *Science in a Renaissance Society* (London 1972) 94. Elsewhere also Erasmus encourages the 'short cut' to knowledge; cf eg Ep 66:9–11 and *De ratione studii* CWE 24 691. Erasmus regarded his *Enchiridion* as a *compendium*; cf the expression '"short way" to Christ' CWE 66 127. He speaks of Christ himself as a *compendium* in the *De philosophia evangelica* 735 with n56.

2 Erasmus speaks of the first edition of his New Testament as a revision and correction of the Vulgate; cf the Translator's Note to 'Title Pages' 740 with nn1, 2.

3 For the haste with which the first edition of the New Testament was completed see Ep 384 introduction and 'New Testament Scholarship' 56–7. The statement here suggests that the *Methodus* was composed in the final stages of the preparation of the New Testament, though scholars have debated whether it was completed before printing began; cf A.F.C. Koch *The Year of Erasmus' Birth and Other Contributions to the Chronology of His Life* (Utrecht 1969) 15.

sumptuous and magnificently mean, conceal with a common seasoning the scraps of yesterday's victuals that they mix in with fresh fare.[4]

If only I could provide what is demanded of me! It is indeed a great thing to arouse in human hearts a burning desire for the study of theology, but it takes a more expert practitioner to expound the way and the method of this heavenly study. Not that I do so in a manner worthy of the subject (for what can human effort do to match the divine realities?), but in such a way that this labour of mine might offer some small advantage to candidates of a most venerable theology.

*Not the least part of a task is to know how to set about it.* And one makes speed enough[5] who nowhere strays from the path. One often doubles both the expense and the effort when with frequent deviations and long digressions one arrives at length at his destination – if he succeeds in arriving at all. Moreover, the person who points out a way that is also short helps the eager student with a double kindness: first, the student reaches the end of his course in better time; and second, he achieves his goal with less effort and expense.[6] But I am a little apprehensive that someone who knows my slight

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4 The *Methodus* was expanded to become the *Ratio* in the autumn of 1518, when it was published separately from the New Testament. This new *Ratio*, a major hermeneutical essay in its own right and no longer prefatory in character, appeared as a preface to the New Testament in the edition of 1519 only. Much of the *Methodus* was incorporated into the *Ratio*. In fact, a line count based on Holborn's edition shows that approximately 90 per cent of the *Methodus* is incorporated into the *Ratio*. In general, the first seven pages of the *Methodus* (Holborn 150–6) are absorbed into the first twenty pages of the *Ratio* (Holborn 177–96), and the last six pages of the *Methodus* (Holborn159–62) into the last twenty-two pages of the *Ratio* (Holborn 284–305). The large central section of the *Ratio* (Holborn197–283) is, for the most part, fundamentally new material in *1518/1519*, with substantial later additions. I regard the *Ratio* as an essentially new work and not merely a second enlarged edition of the *Methodus*. Therefore, the notes that follow designating textual changes or additions presuppose the 1518/1519 edition as the base text. Nevertheless, for the convenience of the reader, passages incorporated into the *Ratio* from the *Methodus* are printed in italic script. In such passages I have attempted to avoid unnecessary duplication in the annotation; hence a number placed in square brackets in the text of the *Ratio* indicates that a note with that number will be found with the *Methodus*.

5 Cf *Adagia* II i 1, where Erasmus sets out three methods of 'setting about a task,' CWE 33 15–17. Cf Ep 858:34–5 (to Paul Volz, 14 August 1518).

6 For Pierre Cousturier's critique of the *compendium* 'short way' see 'New Testament Scholarship' 275 with n1161.

competence will here at once cry out, 'Will you then point out a way in which you yourself have never walked, or, at least, have walked with little success – about to act in a manner no less ridiculous than if a blind man should claim to lead the blind, as in the gospel saying?'[7] Indeed, I should very much like truly to be able to deny your point. But why should *I* not *imitate* those sailors who, though they themselves have barely escaped with nothing at all when their ship has struck upon a rock, *nevertheless are accustomed to have regard for others who set sail, pointing out to them the dangers? Or, at least, those* many-headed[8] *statues of Mercury that* were once customarily *placed at crossroads,* and *from time to time by their direction conduct the traveller to a place where they themselves will never arrive* **[4]**. *To quote a line or two from the poets, 'I shall do the work of a flintstone, which, though itself incapable of cutting, can sharpen a sword.'*[9] Finally, blind man though he may be, if he shows the way, give him consideration nevertheless.

*Now it is true that St Aurelius Augustine, in the four books to which he gave the title On Christian Doctrine, has discussed virtually this* very subject *both fully and with exacting care*, and before him, I suppose, a certain Dionysius in the work that he entitled[10] *On the Divine Names*, again[11] in the little book to which he gave the title *On Mystical Theology*[12] – and it is probable that he did so in the books of *Theological Institutes* and again in the work *On Symbolic*

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7 Cf Matt 15:14; Luke 6:39. Compare Erasmus' comments in 1528 when he was attempting to engage with his work on preaching (the *Ecclesiastes*): 'I will prepare my notes for the *De concionando*, and already magpies and jackdaws are squeaking about it, "What?" they say, "Is he going to teach us how to preach when he has never preached in his life?"' Ep 2033:49–52.

8 'Many-headed': πολυκεφάλους. For the iconography of the many-headed Mercury see *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae* ed Bertrand Jaeger, Pierre Müller, and Christian Augé (Zürich 1990) V 1:304 #140.

9 Horace *Ars poetica* 304–5

10 he entitled] First in *Schoeffer 1519*; in *Froben 1519*, 'is entitled'

11 again ... *Symbolic Theology.*] Added in *1520*

12 Pseudo-Dionysius, long generally assumed to be the Areopagite converted by Paul (Acts 17:34), was a Neoplatonizing Christian of the late fifth–early sixth century, whose works (written in Greek), were popular in Latin translation in the sixteenth century. With the qualification 'I suppose,' Erasmus implicitly questions the traditional date and identification of this author. In the *Antibarbari*, published in 1520 but drafted in 1494–5, Erasmus reflects the traditional view (CWE 23 107:23–4), which, however, is qualified in the *Enchiridion*, composed in 1501–2 and first published in 1503 (cf CWE 66 69 with n29). In *1516*, in an annotation on Acts 17:34 (*in quibus et Dionysius*) Erasmus cites Valla to demonstrate the improbability that this author was the Areopagite, and he explains the false attribution again in the preface to II 1 of his 1516 edition of

*Theology*.[13] *All the more reason why I shall treat this subject not only more succinctly but also in a plainer and less elegant fashion – with a fatter Minerva,* **[7]** *as they say – for I am* certainly *not preparing this for distinguished persons, but am striving with such industry as I have to bring help to unsophisticated folk and to ordinary intellects of a lower order.*

*Accordingly, what should have in the first place been taught* is extremely easy *and can be told, as those say, like one, two, three* **[8]**; *but* in practical experience *it is by far the first and greatest thing of all, and just as it requires only the slightest effort to teach, so it takes an enormous effort to manifest in practice*. What *I mean* is this: *that to this philosophy, which is neither* Platonic nor *Stoic nor* Peripatetic[14] *but entirely of heaven, we bring a mind worthy of it, one that is not only free from all the stains of sin* (as far as possible*) but at peace and rest from every tumult of the passions, so that the image of that eternal truth may be reflected more distinctly in us, as in a peaceful river or a* smooth and highly polished *mirror* **[9]**. *For if Hippocrates* **[10]** *requires of his disciples a blameless and holy character, if Julius Firmicus* **[11]** i*n the superstitious art does not admit a heart and mind corrupted by* the disease of *gain or glory*,[15] if the ancient worshippers of the

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Jerome, CWE 61 73. Erasmus' later view was widely met with hostility; cf eg Ep 1620:79–82, *Manifesta mendacia* CWE 71 123, and *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* CWE 82 242–4. Dionysius appears later in *Ratio* 677 (cf n988) and in *Peregrinatio apostolorum* 964, where see n75.

13 Four authentic works of Pseudo-Dionysius are extant: *The Divine Names*, *Mystical Theology, The Celestial Hierarchy*, and *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*. In *The Divine Names* the author explains at the beginning that the approach to theology must be through the Scriptures and with a pure and humble heart that waits to receive illumination, a point more briefly made in *Mystical Theology*. *Theological Institutes* translates *Institutiones theologicae*, while *Symbolic Theology* renders *Significativa theologia,* allusions, apparently, to works described by Pseudo-Dionysius in *The Divine Names* and *Mystical Theology*; for *Theological Institutes* see *Divine Names* PG 3 593B, 646B; and for *Symbolic Theology* see *Mystical Theology* PG 3 1033A–B. These works either were lost before the Dionysiac corpus was assembled or are wholly fictional; cf Paul Rorem *Pseudo-Dionysius: A Commentary on the Texts and an Introduction to their Influence* (New York 1993) 134.

14 'Stoic' and 'Peripatetic' identify the philosophical schools that found their origin in, respectively, Zeno (320–280 BC) and Aristotle (380–300 BC). The Academy of Plato (429–347 BC) gave rise to the Academic school, on which see *Methodus* n121.

15 Erasmus frequently describes evil affections as diseases; cf eg *Ratio* 582, 584 and *Enchiridion* CWE 66 44 where the passions are called 'diseases of the mind'; similarly in the paraphrases, eg on Matt 5:2 and 3, 6:19, 8:16 CWE 45 84, 85, 121, 145. In the annotation on Rom 1:26 ('to passions of shame') Erasmus cites Horace for the image; cf CWE 56 56 with n3.

demons would not receive anyone into their profane mysteries unless they had first been cleansed by many observances,[16] *how much more is it right for us to approach the school – or, more truly, the temple – of this divine wisdom with minds completely cleansed*.

In Exodus[17] the people of God, about to hear the voice of God from afar, are ordered to undergo cleansing during a period of two days. Further, what extraordinary purity do we think is demanded of Moses and Aaron, who climb to the top of the mountain and penetrate that misty and awesome darkness where there is seen what no light either of earth or of heaven can show, where they engage close up in conversation with God? It is of the same import, I think, that when Moses was hastening close to Mount Horeb, running up to see the exceptional wonder of a bush that was burning but was not consumed, he was not admitted to conversation with God until he cast off his shoes from his feet. What are the feet except the affections? What are feet freed from the encumbrance of shoes except the soul that is not weighed down by earthly desires, desires for things that are fleeting?[18] But God speaks to us in the arcane books more truly and more effectively than he spoke to Moses from the bush, provided we approach the conversation with a pure heart. Paul calls the exposition of arcane Scripture not philosophy but prophecy.[19] But prophecy is a gift of that eternal Spirit.

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16 For rites of purification preparatory to initiation into the ancient mysteries see Marvin W. Meyer *The Ancient Mysteries: A Source Book* (San Francisco 1987) 10; also, from antiquity, Apuleius *Metamorphoses* 11.21–3.

17 In Exodus ... pure heart.] Except for the last two sentences, this paragraph was added in *1520*. For the allusions in this passage see Exod 19:10–12 (the people, remaining at a distance from the mountain, cleanse their garments), Exod 19:24 (Moses and Aaron ascend the mountain; cf 24:12), Exod 20:21 (thick darkness), Exod 20:21–24:18 (the Lord speaks to Moses on the mountain), Exod 3:1–4:17 (the burning bush and conversation with God).

18 Erasmus frequently reflects a Platonizing psychology; cf *Enchiridion* CWE 66 41–54, *Moria* CWE 27 150, and CWE 50 109 n42. For the passions as an encumbrance to the soul see Plato *Phaedo* 65A–67B; *Enchiridion* CWE 66 66; also John B. Payne 'Toward the Hermeneutics of Erasmus' in *Scrinium Erasmianum* ed J. Coppens (Leiden 1969) II 13–23. Compare the image of 'feet' with the image in the preface to Cratander's Latin edition of Erasmus' New Testament: We must 'go to Christ … on the feet of our hearts,' 'Separate Latin Editions' 721.

19 On prophecy as the exposition of Scripture see the paraphrases on 1 Cor 12:10 CWE 43 151–2 with nn11 and 15, on 1 Cor 13:2 CWE 43 157–8 with n4, and on Acts 15:32 CWE 50 99 with n64.

For this, therefore, you should prepare your heart, so that you also may deserve to be called by the prophetic term 'taught by God.'[20] *Let there be in you* an eye of faith that is sound and like that of the dove, an eye that sees nothing but the heavenly things.[21] Add to this *a most ardent desire for learning. This incomparable pearl does not deign either to be loved in any ordinary way or to be cherished along with others; it demands a thirsting soul and a soul thirsting for nothing else* **[12]**. *Let* all pride *now* be far away, *all arrogance be far away from those about to approach this sacred threshold* **[13]**. From things of this sort that Spirit at once recoils, for it takes delight in souls that are gentle and meek.[22] The palace of this queen is majestic if you go all the way into its innermost chambers, but access lies through an extremely low portal; you must bend your neck if you want admittance.[23] Let *the appetite for glory be far away, that plague most pernicious to the truth* and customary companion of indomitable natures; *far away obstinacy, the breeder of brawls, and, even more, blind temerity*. What his disciples offered to Pythagoras when he taught them certain magical numbers,[24] you should much more offer to the Spirit, your teacher, and distrusting your own judgment, give yourself to the Spirit to be formed and moulded.

*When you enter places that are to be venerated with religious devotion, you fondly kiss everything, you reverence everything, and as though some divine power is everywhere present, you treat everything with religious awe. Remember that you must do this much more scrupulously when you are about to enter this inner*

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20 'Taught by God': *θεοδίδακτος*. The Greek word is found in 1 Thess 4:9, while the phrase 'taught of God' appears in John 6:45, quoting Isa 54:13; cf the annotations on 1 Thess 4:9 (*a Deo didicistis*) and on John 6:45 (*docibiles*).

21 For the 'sound' eye see Matt 6:22 and Luke 11:34. Adopting here the Vulgate expression *oculus simplex* found in both passages, Erasmus explains the image in the annotation on Matt 6:22 (*si oculus tuus nequam*) as an 'eye free from mucus, or inflammation or disease.' The 'eyes of doves' is an expression found in the Vulgate of the Song of Sol 1:15 (VG 1:14) and 4:1. For the dove as an image of the heavenly Spirit see Matt 3:16; Mark 1:10; Luke 3:22.

22 For the gentle soul as the habitat of the Holy Spirit see the references in *Methodus* n9.

23 Cf *Enchiridion* ('the doorway is low') CWE 66 34, *In psalmum 33* CWE 64 279, and *Explanatio symboli* CWE 70 237–8; cf also Virgil *Aeneid* 8.359–68. The image of palace and queen suggests the common designation of theology as 'the queen of the sciences'; cf Epp 108:30–41 and 980:9–10.

24 For Pythagoras as an educator see C.J. de Vogel *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism* (Assen 1964) 159–89. For Pythagoras' 'magical numbers' see Walter Burkert *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* trans Edwin L. Minar Jr (Cambridge MA 1972) 185–90; also *Moria* CWE 27 90 with n87 and *Adagia* I i 2 (on 'odd and even numbers' listed under 'The Precepts of Pythagoras') CWE 31 40:257–41:279.

*sanctuary of the Divine Spirit. What is granted to you to see, fall down before it and kiss it*; *what is not granted to see – this, though concealed, worship nevertheless from afar* in sincere faith *and venerate, whatever it is. Let ungodly curiosity be absent* **[14]**. *You will deserve to see certain mysteries* **[15]** *perhaps for this very reason, that in reverence you withdraw yourself from their sight*. Perhaps[25] Moses taught us this when he veiled his face so that he might not look upon the Lord speaking to him from the bush.

In the case of other disciplines, Augustine wants us to apply ourselves to them with caution and prudence; he wants us to read books of human learning[26] with judgment and discrimination.[27] In the Scriptures, if you meet anything that little accords with the divine nature or seems to conflict with the teaching of Christ, do not unfairly blame what is written, but assume rather that you do not grasp what you are reading, or that the words contain a trope, or that the text is corrupt, as for example, when you read that God is angry or is moved to repent, though Christian faith regards it as certain that God is absolutely free from affections of this sort; or when you read that Christ bids his disciples to sell their cloaks and buy themselves swords, though earlier it was he who had forbidden them to resist evil.[28]

In the case of the disciplines of human learning, each has its own goal: in the case of an orator, you seek to speak with facility and flare;[29] in the case of a logician, to make clever inferences and ensnare your opponent. *Let this be your first and only goal, this your prayer, attend to this alone, that you be changed, be swept away* **[16]**, *be inspired, be transformed into what you are learning. The food*

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25 Perhaps...bush.] Added in *1520*; cf Exod 3:2–6.

26 'Books of human learning': *libros humanos*. Erasmus sets up a contrast between 'human books' and the divine Scriptures, each of which requires from the reader a distinctive approach.

27 Cf Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 2.39.58.

28 Cf Exod 4:14; Num 11:1 (God becomes angry); Gen 6:6 (God repents); Luke 22:36 (buying swords – for Erasmus' interpretation of which see 640 with n791 below); Matt 5:39 (resisting evil). In his annotation on Luke 22:36 (*sed nunc qui habet sacculum*) Erasmus made great efforts beginning in *1516* to explain Jesus' command to buy swords, with large additions in *1519* and *1527*, in the latter of which he seems grudgingly to accept the theory of the just war; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 74 with n301 (*1516*), 136 (*1519*), and 305–6 (*1527*). Erasmus' recurrent attention to difficult problems of exegesis is a characteristic feature of the *Annotations*; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 137 with n570.

29 'Facility and flare': *copiose splendideque*, words fundamental in rhetorical art; for copious speech as one of the goals of the orator see *De copia* CWE 24 295–300; for *oratio splendida* see Cicero *Brutus* 79.273, also 20.78 and 55.201.

*of the soul is useful not if it remains in the memory as in the stomach, but only if it penetrates into the very affections* **[17]** *and into the very viscera of the mind. You may conclude that you have made progress, not if you debate more keenly* **[18]**, *but only if you sense that* little by little *you are becoming a different person, less proud, less irascible, less fond* of money or pleasures or *of life, if every day some vice disappears and some growth in godliness occurs*. In debating you must observe prudence and the greatest self-control so that you seem to be engaged in a conference, not a conflict. Let prayer or thanksgiving frequently interrupt the reading[30] – prayer that seeks the help of the sacred Spirit; thanksgiving that acknowledges the favour whenever you feel that you have made progress.

As a result of the habits of certain people, this most holy study has a bad reputation among some, since those who have climbed to the summit and peak of this profession are sometimes[31] more uncouth than rustics, more vain, more irritable, more poisonous in tongue, and absolutely more disagreeable in all the familiar intercourse of our lives not only than the uneducated, but even than they themselves normally are, so that in the eyes of some theology itself seems to have made them what they are.[32] St James admonishes that the one who has achieved true wisdom should exhibit and show it not by arrogance and obstinacy in debate but by gentleness and an upright character. He says, moreover, that the knowledge that brings with it a somewhat bitter[33] jealousy and obstinate contention does not come from above; rather, he calls it earthly and unspiritual and devilish. For the wisdom that is truly theological is, he says, first pure, then modest, peaceable, pliant, full of mercy and good fruits, knowing nothing of partiality, nothing of hypocrisy.[34]

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30 'Reading': *lectio*, a term long in use to designate both the scientific investigation of Scripture as in the schools, and the devotional reading of Scriptures as in the monasteries; cf CHB II 193–5.

31 sometimes] Added in *1522*

32 Cf the portrait of the moral character of the theologian in *Moria* CWE 27 126–30 with n399. Jacobus Latomus objected to Erasmus' claim that a good theologian was also a pious man; cf Ep 936:53–7 and *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* CWE 71 55 and 61.

33 somewhat bitter] *subamarulentam*, first in *Schoeffer 1519*; in *Froben 1519*, *amarulentam* 'bitter'

34 Erasmus cites from James 3:13–17, mingling the Vulgate with his own translation. For the characterization of wisdom found here see the paraphrase on these verses, CWE 44 159 with n35.

*Now, in regard to that literature by whose support we more easily attain this*, without question *our first concern should be*[35] *to learn well the three languages – Latin, Greek, and Hebrew – since it is clear that all of mystic Scripture has been handed down in these*. Of these languages St Augustine was genuinely skilled only in Latin, had some small acquaintance with Greek, but neither knew nor hoped to know Hebrew; nevertheless, in *On Christian Doctrine* book 2 he does not hesitate to declare that the knowledge of these languages is essential whether to understand the sacred books or to restore[36] them.[37] For just as no one reads a text written with an alphabet he does not know, so without a knowledge of the languages no one understands what he reads. *And do not, dear reader, I pray you, here forthwith recoil, beaten back as though with a club, by the difficulty of the task. If you have the intent, if you have a* suitable *teacher, these three languages will be learned with almost less trouble than one learns the pitiful stammering of a single 'half language'* **[20]** today – *no doubt because of* both *the ignorance* and the lack *of teachers*.[38]

On this count especially it is right that the memory of the most distinguished Jérôme de Busleyden, once provost of Aire, be sacred both to all who pursue the liberal arts[39] and, above all, to candidates of theology. Busleyden, cheating even his heirs, bequeathed a large sum of money specifically to procure with a decent salary those who should profess the three languages at Louvain. His brother, Gilles de Busleyden, also deserves a large portion of this praise, for he so supports his brother's last will and testament, or rather, is himself so steeped in liberal learning, that he prefers the money be devoted to supporting the studies of all rather than to enhancing his own coffers.[40]

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35 should be] *debetur* first in *Schoeffer 1519*; in *Froben 1519*, *dabitur* 'will be given'

36 restore] In all editions except *Schoeffer 1519*, which reads *recte tuendos* 'to preserve correctly'

37 Cf Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 2.11.16. On Augustine's skill in languages see *Methodus* n32.

38 'Lack of teachers': The comment may reflect Erasmus' concern in 1518 and 1519 to find good teachers for the Collegium Trilingue; cf eg Maarten van Dorp's observation in Ep 852:74–7 (July 1518), and Erasmus' not always successful search for teachers for the new institution, Ep 865:61–4 with n61.

39 'Liberal arts': *honestarum disciplinarum*

40 Jérôme de Busleyden (c 1470–1517) acquired an excellent education at Orléans and at Padua, where he received a doctorate in law in 1503. In 1500 he had become provost of St Peter's at Aire, a small town not far from Saint-Omer and after numerous ecclesiastical preferments was appointed in 1517 to the council of Charles, heir to the Spanish kingdoms and future emperor. In this capacity he was in the same year travelling to Spain with the chancellor Jean Le Sauvage

Etienne Poncher, once[41] bishop of Paris, now archbishop of Sens,[42] a man worthy of the memory of all ages, diligently emulates this most splendid example, summoning from all sides with generous rewards those who would teach the languages.[43]

Aurelius Augustine does *not demand that you advance in* Hebrew and Greek literature *to prodigious fluency*, which, even in Latin, is the fortunate lot granted to only a few. *It is enough if you get as far as neatness and propriety of expression, that is, if you achieve some modest skill such as suffices for making judgments* **[21]**. *For, to pass over all the other disciplines of humane learning, it is in no way possible to understand what is written if you are ignorant of the language in which it is written* – unless, perhaps, sitting idly by we prefer to wait with the apostles for this as some gift from heaven.[44] *We must not, I think, listen to*

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to make preparations for Charles' return there as king, but Busleyden fell ill and died at Bordeaux; cf Epp 205 and 608 introduction. Two days before he had left, he had made his will, which provided funds for the establishment of the Collegium Trilingue in Louvain. Erasmus had made the acquaintance of Busleyden in Orléans in 1500, and by 1516 the two enjoyed a close relationship. Erasmus provided much of the inspiration that established the Collegium; cf Ep 691 introduction. After Jérôme's death, Gilles (1465–1536), eldest of four brothers, helped to carry out the plans for the Collegium Trilingue and continued to support it once it had been established; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 97 with n391. On the brothers see further CEBR I 234–7.

41 once] Added in *1520*

42 now archbishop of Sens] Added in *1520*

43 Etienne Poncher (1446–1525) studied civil and canon law, and under both Louis XII and Francis I enjoyed a successful career as diplomat and churchman. He became bishop of Paris in 1503, and archbishop of Sens in 1519. Others confirm Erasmus' appreciation of him here as a patron of learning. Budé described him as 'one who inspires and encourages literary men,' Ep 522:122; Germain de Brie declared that 'he alone of all our bench of bishops not merely respects aspirants to sound learning ... but spurs them on with rewards,' Ep 569:21–3; and Nicolas Bérault thought him to be the 'almost unequalled Maecenas of our times,' Ep 925:23–4. Budé, in the letter cited, informed Erasmus that Poncher supported the effort to bring Erasmus to Paris for the Collège Royale to be established by Francis I (Ep 522:163–6); cf Ep 531:618–34.

44 Cf Acts 1:4–5 and 2:1–4. Erasmus' guarded sarcasm here may reflect a concealed response to criticism of his *1516* annotation on Acts 10:38 (*quomodo unxit eum*), where he had observed that the apostles spoke idiomatic vulgar Greek; the gift of tongues at Pentecost could not therefore have been perpetual. Johann Maier of Eck had criticized the annotation early in 1518; cf Ep 769:69–83. Edward Lee also objected; cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei* 2 (Note 122) CWE 72 254–6. Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 135 with n566.

*those persons who, though they waste away in sophistical trumpery* and illiterate literature *even to a decrepit old age, are accustomed to say, 'Jerome's translation is enough for me,' – as those above all reply who do not care to know even Latin, so that for them, certainly, Jerome translated in vain* **[22]**.

*But to disregard for the moment the fact that it matters very much whether you draw from the originating springs of Scripture or from any sort of pool whatever, what of the fact that certain things, because of idioms peculiar to the languages, cannot even be transferred to a foreign language without losing their original clarity, their native grace, their special nuance?*[45] *What of the fact that some things are too small to be translated at all, as Jerome everywhere cries out and complains?* **[24]** *What of the fact that many things restored by Jerome have perished due to the ravages of time – for example, his* New Testament[46] *emended according to the Greek original*, or the marks of the obelus and the asterisk, or the prophets punctuated by phrase, clause, and full sentence?[47] *What of the fact that either through the error or the indiscretion of the scribes* the sacred codices[48] *were long ago corrupted and today at many points are being corrupted*? What of the fact that Jerome did not by himself restore everything, nor was he able to do so? What if he also wrongly emended or translated some things? Here, I beg you, desist from that tragical lamentation, 'O heaven! O earth!'[49] Let the truth be told: however godly the man, however learned, he was a human being and able both to be led astray and to lead astray. Many things, I would imagine, escaped his

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45 On the critique here of translations see *Methodus* 429 with n23. These comments in the *Ratio* were attacked at an early point by Jacobus Latomus and later were cited by Pierre Cousturier, who called them 'silly'; cf *Apologia adversus Latomi dialogum* CWE 71 46 and 54 and *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 770C–D.

46 New Testament] First in *1522*; previously 'Gospels,' as in the *Methodus*. In fact, Jerome revised the Gospels but not the entire New Testament; cf *Methodus* n27.

47 The use of the obelus and asterisk to mark passages that ought to be added to or omitted from a received text was borrowed from the practice of classical grammarians and had been used by Origen; cf CHB I 457–8. Jerome repeatedly comments on his use of these signs; cf eg the *Prologus* to the Pentateuch and to Job, and the *Praefatio* to the Psalms, Weber 4, 731, 767. Cf Augustine Ep 71, where the system is described. For Jerome's efforts to mark through phrases and clauses the movement of thought in the books of the prophets see the *Prologus* to Isaiah, Weber 1096.

48 'The sacred codices': *sacri codices*, in place of *libri* 'books' in the *Methodus*. On 'codex' see Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* I 486.

49 Cf Terence *Adelphi* 790. Pierre Cousturier thought this paragraph 'perverse,' 'heretical,' 'blasphemous'; cf *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 771E–F.

notice, many things led him astray. *Finally, what of the fact that not even those* annotations *with which Jerome restored these texts are well understood if you are completely ignorant of the languages on whose evidence he depends?*

*But if Jerome's translation* **[27]** *sufficed once and for all, whatever was the point of assuring through pontifical decrees that the true reading of the Old Testament be sought in the Hebrew books, an accurate text of the New in the Greek sources* **[28]** – the very thing Augustine teaches in more than one place?[50] *Lastly, if the translation* we commonly use *was sufficient, how did it happen afterwards that theologians of the first rank slipped as a result of so many manifest and shameful errors, which is so obvious that it can be neither denied nor concealed. Among these* are both Augustine, foremost among the ancients, and *Thomas Aquinas himself* (in my opinion *the most assiduous of all the moderns*) **[29]** – *and let their*[51] *curse be upon me if I lie or say this as an insult. Not to* speak at all *for the moment about the rest, who, in my* judgment *at least, are not to be compared with Thomas.*

*If anyone has already grown too old for this, let him play the part of a prudent man, be content with his lot, and,* to whatever extent *possible, rely on the industry of others, provided he does not obstruct young people* of promise, *for whom* above all *this is written. And yet I, certainly, would not be the cause of despair even to the old, since I can name four men specifically, well known personally to me and also distinguished by their books already published, who came to the study of Greek, none of them under the age of forty, and one forty-eight. Moreover, they themselves by their own work witness to the mastery they have achieved* **[30]**. *If Cato's example means little to us* **[31]**, *St Augustine, himself already a bishop, already* growing *old, returned to Greek, which as a boy he had indeed tasted – and loathed* **[32]**. *Rodolphus Agricola, the singular light and ornament of our Germany, neither was ashamed, great connoisseur of letters that he was, to learn Hebrew when he was already beyond his fortieth year, nor did he despair*, a man *as old as he was, for as a youth he*

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50 Cf Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 2.11.16 and *De civitate Dei* 15.14.2, where, however, the Septuagint is also granted an independent authority. The authority of the Hebrew is even more emphatically qualified in *De civitate Dei* 18.43, following an allusion to Jerome's translation. Pierre Cousturier regarded Erasmus' appeal to pontifical decrees as simply false, and Erasmus in response identified the statement as from the *Decretum* of Gratian, *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 775A–C; in fact in the *Decretum* the statement is taken from Jerome Ep 71.5.3, though attributed to Augustine; cf Ep 182:191–4 with 193n.

51 their] First in *1520*; previously 'his,' as in the *Methodus*. For one of Augustine's most 'shameful errors' see the annotation on Rom 14:5 ('for one judges'). Cousturier attacked this statement, as well as those identified just above (nn49, 50); cf LB IX 775E–F.

*had imbibed Greek* **[33]**. *I myself* have already begun *my* fifty-third year,[52] *and when I can, I come back to Hebrew, with which I made some acquaintance long ago. There is nothing*, in fact, *the human mind cannot achieve provided it has learned self-discipline, and provided it greatly desires something. For this task, as I said, some modest ability is enough, provided, of course, that it is free from temerity, which generally pronounces an opinion more boldly precisely as its judgment is less discerning. In this respect, youth is indeed more fortunate, but* nevertheless *we must not despair of the elderly* **[35]**. *The former offers in itself more hope, but to the latter intensity of desire sometimes furnishes what the strength of youth does not provide for others. Moreover, in the letters* and prefaces *Jerome himself sufficiently refutes the opinion of Hilary and Augustine, who think that nothing beyond the Septuagint is to be required for the books of the Old Testament;*[53] *and if he had not, Hilary's egregious mistake in the* word *'Hosanna' quite adequately* did *so. St Ambrose, too, stumbled over the same stone* **[36]**.

But it is a human characteristic that each of us approves only so much as we can understand. Augustine checked the Old Testament against the Septuagint; much rather would he have checked it against the Hebrew verity if he had acquired the language. Elsewhere[54] also, when he was debating with Cresconius (if I remember correctly), and his opponent had introduced a text from Ecclesiasticus that made no sense, he bade him consult the Greek translation, as though the more reliably true text could be found there.[55]

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52 See *Methodus* n34 for Erasmus' age; and Ep 373:81–3, the preface to the *Annotations* (1516) ('Prefaces and Letters' 785 with n14), on his Hebrew.

53 On Jerome's evaluation of the Septuagint see eg his *Prologus* to the Pentateuch, Weber 3–4.

54 Elsewhere ... there.] Added in *1522*

55 In *In Heptateuchum locutiones* and *In Heptateuchum quaestiones*, both written in 419, Augustine frequently cites the Septuagint, 'checking the Latin against the Greek.' For advice to consult the Greek see Augustine *Contra Cresconium Donatistam* 2.27.33. The debate turned on Ecclus 34:30: 'If one washes after touching a corpse, and touches it again, what has been gained by washing?' (NRSV). In the debate, the second clause was omitted and the Vulgate's literal translation of the text gave the absurd sense, 'If one is baptized for the dead, how has the baptism helped?' Hence Augustine's request to check the Greek. The Wisdom of Ben Sira was originally written in Hebrew by Jesus Ben Sira just after 200 BC but was translated into Greek by Ben Sira's grandson, and from Greek into Latin probably in the second century AD. From the time of Cyprian it became known in the early church as the book of Ecclesiasticus. On the Donatists see *Ratio* 689 with n1042.

*Further, if some rare felicity, 'some exceptional natural gift,' as we say*, **[37]** *seems to give promise of a distinguished theologian, I am not averse to something Augustine welcomed* in the books *On Christian Doctrine* **[38]**, *that such natural abilities be trained*[56] suitably to one's age *and equipped through a modest* and guarded *acquaintance with the more liberal disciplines, namely, dialectic, rhetoric, arithmetic, music;*[57] *above all, however, through a knowledge of the objects of nature, for example*, stars, *animals, trees, jewels, and, in addition, places – especially* those that *divine literature mentions. For it is the case that when territories are recognized* from cosmography,[58] *we follow the narrative in our thought* as it passes before us, *and we are, as it were,* completely *carried away with it*, having a sense of pleasure, *so that we seem not to read about but to look upon the events narrated; at the same time, what you have thus read sticks much more firmly*. In truth the prophets often stud their books with the names of places, like lights of a sort, and if anyone tries to investigate the allegory, he will not do so either safely or auspiciously if he has no knowledge of the setting of the places. *Now if we will learn from historical literature not only the setting but also the origin, customs, institutions, culture,* **[39]** *and character of the peoples whose history is being narrated or to whom the apostles write, it is remarkable how much more light and, if I may use the expression, life will come to the reading. The reading has to be*[59] *quite boring and lifeless, whenever not only such things but also the terms for almost everything are unknown. The result is that, either shamelessly guessing or consulting absolutely wretched dictionaries, they* **[40]** *make a quadruped out of a tree, a fish out of a jewel*, a river out of a musician, a shrub out of a town, a bird out of a star, pants out of plants. *It seems* to them *profoundly learned if only they add 'It is the name of a*

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56 be trained] *instituatur*, first in *Schoeffer 1519*; in *Froben 1519*, *instruatur* 'be furnished' (as in the *Methodus*). The *De doctrina christiana* comprises four 'books.'

57 Erasmus omits 'astrology' from the otherwise identical list in the *Methodus* but adds 'stars' among the 'objects of nature' in the list that immediately follows here. For Erasmus' views on astrology, with an ample list of references, see Harry Vredefeld 'The Ages of Erasmus and the Year of his Birth' *Renaissance Quarterly* 46 (1993) 767–8, and in particular the references to Ep 267 and *Institutio principis christiani* CWE 27 247–8. See also W.P.D. Wightman *Science in a Renaissance Society* (London 1972) 33–41.

58 Cf the Glossary in W.P.D. Wightman *Science in a Renaissance Society* (London 1972) 16: '"Cosmography" ... was commonly used [to describe] the system of concentric spheres ... "Geography" gradually emerged as a separate discipline [the study of the terrestrial sphere] during the course of the sixteenth century.' For a somewhat similar list of subjects needed by the teacher to expound secular literature see *De ratione studii* CWE 24 673–4.

59 'Has to be': *opertet* in Holborn; an error for *oportet* as in the *Methodus*

*jewel,' or 'It is a species of tree,' or* 'It is *a kind of animal*,' or whatever you prefer. *But often the understanding of the mystery hangs upon the very nature of the thing*.

This principle Augustine reveals very clearly in *On Christian Doctrine* book 2, the sixteenth chapter, through some examples he brings in to demonstrate it.[60] He also[61] tells in the work he wrote *Against Faustus the Manichean* how he had asked that the fruit of the mandrake be brought to him so that he might deduce from either the form, taste, or smell something that would contribute to the explanation of the allegory of the mystic narrative about Rachel selling to her sister, Leah, at the price of that fruit the opportunity to lie with the husband they held in common.[62] Moreover,[63] with how many words does St Ambrose, in his exposition of the thirteenth chapter of Luke, explain in what respects the fig tree differs from the other trees; he does so that it might become more evident how well this tree, as a type, fits the synagogue.[64]

On the other hand, certain people who have relied on dialectic alone reckon that they are sufficiently informed to discuss anything at all. They[65] attribute so much to this discipline that they suppose the Christian faith is finished and done for if it is not secured by the support of dialectic, though meanwhile they disdain grammar and rhetoric as utterly superfluous. And Augustine does indeed approve of anyone who grasps the principles of logical deduction, provided there is no trace of the disease peculiar to this skill – obstinate disputation and a passion for wrangling.[66] But I ask you, what will you divide or define or infer if you do not know the essence and nature of the things you are discussing? How will it help you to have constructed a syllogism in the form of *celarent* or *baroco*[67] when you dispute about

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60 Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 2.16. 23

61 He also ... held in common.] Added in *1522*

62 Cf Augustine *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* 2.56. Erasmus accentuates the dramatic setting. Augustine says merely that, when he happened to see the fruit, he was very pleased because of this very passage in Genesis, and he investigated the nature of the mandrake's fruit, using the senses of sight, smell, and taste. Finding it flat to taste but pleasant to smell, he concluded it was a figure of those who acquire the odour of a good reputation for their work in the church. For the biblical narrative see Gen 30:14–16.

63 Moreover ... synagogue.] Added in *1523*

64 Cf Ambrose *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam* 7.168–72 (on Luke 13:6–9).

65 They ... utterly superfluous.] Added in *1520*

66 Cf Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 2.31.48.

67 *Celarent* and *baroco* were the names given to two patterns or figures in which syllogisms were constructed; cf Joseph Gredt *Elementa philosophiae Aristotelico-Thomisticae* 7th ed (Freiburg 1937) I 57–9; also Piltz *Medieval Learning* 99–102.

a crocodile, if you do not know what kind of tree or animal a crocodile is? These things are not, in fact, learned so much from Aristotle's eight books of *Physics* (which alone are now taught in the schools) as from his extremely erudite commentaries on animals, from his books on *Meteorology*, from[68] his books *On the World*, *On the Soul*, *On Sense and Sensation*, *On Memory and Remembering*, from the *Problems,* from the books of Theophrastus *On Plants, On Winds*, *On Precious Stones*, from Pliny, from Macrobius and Athenaeus, from Dioscorides, from the *Natural Questions* of Seneca and other writers of this sort.[69]

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68 from ... *Remembering*] Added in *1522*

69 For the works, genuine and spurious, here attributed to Aristotle see John M. Rist *The Mind of Aristotle: A Study in Philosophical Growth* (Toronto 1989) 3–36; and Sir David Ross *Aristotle* 5th ed (London 1949) 7–19. *Physics* translates [*ex libris*] *naturalium*. The *Physics* (*Physica*) is a highly abstract study in eight books of such principles in nature as causation and motion. The *Meteorology* (*Meteorologica*), as the name indicates, is a study of weather and the phenomena associated with it. Aristotle wrote an extensive study, *Investigation into Animal Life* (*Historia animalium*), followed by several works on the biology of animal life, eg *The Parts of Animals* (*De partibus animalium*) and *The Generation of Animals* (*De generatione animalium*). His work *On the Soul* (*De anima*) was likewise a major work on psychology, followed by the *Parva naturalia*, a collection of several lesser works on psychology that included *On Sense and Sensation* (*De sensu et sensibili*) and *On Memory and Remembering* (*De memoria et reminiscentia*). *On the World* (*De mundo*) and *Problems* (*Problemata*) are regarded as spurious. The books in this recommended list offer a more extensive descriptive knowledge of natural objects than does the more abstract *Physics*. The list is, however, very similar to that prescribed for the arts degree in medieval universities; for the University of Paris see Rashdall *Universities of Europe* 442–3. For a brief discussion of the place of Aristotle in the arts degrees at Oxford and Cambridge in the sixteenth century see Craig R. Thompson 'Universities in Tudor England' in *Tudor and Stuart England* 344–9. Theophrastus (c 371–286 BC) was an associate and successor of Aristotle and a prolific author on a wide range of subjects. He wrote two major works on plants, the *Inquiry into Plants* (*Historia plantarum*) and *On the Explanations of Plants* (*De causis plantarum*), as well as books on winds (*De ventis*) and on stones (*De lapidibus*). Dioscorides from Cilicia (first century AD) wrote a work in five books, *Materials of Medicine* (*Materia medica*), which lists approximately seven hundred plants and more than one thousand drugs. Seneca the Younger (4 BC–AD 65) wrote a work in seven books on *Natural Questions* (*Naturales quaestiones*) in which he discusses such natural phenomena as 'light in the sky,' waters, earthquakes, etc; Erasmus published an edition of the work in 1515; cf Ep 1656:15 with n3. The remaining authors cited are encyclopedic. The *Natural History* (*Naturalis historia*) of Pliny the Elder (AD 23–79) in thirty-seven books 'is an encyclopedia of astronomy, geography,

In fact, even the poets contribute much to this part of learning, in whom descriptions of this sort frequently occur: for example, in Lucan, what an enormous account of drugs![70] But Oppian also professedly published on the nature of fish and wild animals, Nicander on harmful beasts.[71] There are certain arts, classed by Augustine among the superstitious and reprehensible, from whose practices certain narratives in Scripture are drawn.[72] It will help, therefore, to know the superstitious practices of even these arts, to the learning of which the reading of the poets who repeatedly portray the follies of magic is especially conducive.[73] The books of Seneca on the superstitious worship of the gods would also be helpful if only they were extant:

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minerology, zoology and botany'; H. Rackham *Pliny: Natural History* Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge MA 1938) I viii. Macrobius (fl early fifth century AD) wrote *Commentarii in somnium Scipionis*, a commentary (which included considerable astronomical lore) on the dream of Scipio, a narrative found in the sixth book of Cicero's *De republica*. Macrobius also wrote the *Saturnalia*, ostensibly a dialogue on the Roman feast of the Saturnalia, but filled with information on many subjects, such as history, geography, and the sciences. The *Sophists at Dinner* (*Deipnosophistae*) by Athenaeus, a Greek-speaking Egyptian (fl c AD 200) is a book on gastronomy that also discusses fruit, wine, musical instruments, furniture, etc (*editio princeps*, Venice: Aldine Press 1514). With this list of encyclopedic authors compare the list in *De ratione studii* CWE 24 672–5.

70 Cf Lucan's account of various kinds of poisonous snakes and the antidotes to their venom in *Bellum civile* 9.700–838.

71 Two works are attributed to Oppian (fl AD 200), a Greek-speaker from Cilicia: the *Cynegetica* (on animals and hunting) and the *Halieutica* (on fish and fishing). Only the *Halieutica* is regarded as genuine. Greek texts appeared in 1515, and both works were published by the Aldine Press in 1517, with a Latin translation of the *Halieutica*. For the value placed upon Oppian by some contemporaries of Erasmus see Ep 1260:191–3. Nicander of Colophon (probably mid-second century BC) wrote a work, the *Theriaca*, on snakes, spiders, insects, and drugs effective against their poisonous bites and stings, as well as a work, the *Alexipharmaca*, describing antidotes to various poisons.

72 Cf Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 2.18.28–29.46. Augustine mentions in particular magic, astrology, and clairvoyance. He condemns such knowledge, though his discussion proceeds from an effort to show that some pagan learning, even when associated with superstition, is a necessary aid to the reading of the Scriptures. Augustine offers no examples of biblical accounts drawn from superstitious practices, but Erasmus may have in mind such passages as Exod 7:8–12 (magicians of Egypt); 1 Sam 28 (witch of Endor); Acts 13:6–11 (Elymas the magician).

73 Cf Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 2.20.30. For magic in the poets see eg Virgil *Aeneid* 4.478–99; Horace *Epodes* 5; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 7.179–293; Tibullus 1.2.41–58 and 1.5.37–56.

Augustine affirms in his work *The City of God* [74] that he had read them. And there are – or rather were – certain people who through their own laborious effort have endeavoured to ease the burden for Christians by explaining the terms and the nature of only those things that are mentioned in the divine books. Among these was Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea. And there are extant even today certain works of this kind, partly under the name of Jerome, but they are, as it is clear, mingled and mutilated.[75] And yet many of us do not read even these; but if we meet some word from an unknown or foreign language, we appeal to Eberhard Graecista as our Delphic oracle, or to that little book *On Hebrew Names* that reflects such mingled sources. To some, one book is sufficient for everything – the *Catholicon* or Isidore, whose work is more erudite than the *Catholicon*.[76]

*I also think that it will be useful for the young man destined for theology to be carefully practised in the figures and tropes of the grammarians and rhetoricians*, which are learned with little effort; also *to acquire preliminary experience in*

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74 in his work *The City of God* ] Added in *1522*; cf *De civitate Dei* 6.10–11. Augustine speaks of the 'book against superstitions' (*liber contra superstitiones*) by Seneca the Younger, a book Diomedes, grammarian of the late fourth / early fifth century AD (cf 509 n97 below), calls the *Dialogus de superstitione* (*Dialogue on Superstition*). Erasmus refers to Seneca's book elsewhere; cf CWE 42 9.

75 Numerous *Onomastica*, books explaining biblical names, appeared in antiquity (cf *Patrology* IV 204). Eusebius (c 260–c 340), author of the *Ecclesiastical History*, compiled an *Onomasticon*, listing the names of places alphabetically for each book or group of books in the Bible with information about each place. Jerome translated this work into Latin, 'omitting some things, changing others' (preface, PL 23 859–60), in a book titled *De situ et nominibus locorum Hebraeorum* 'On the Location and Names of Hebrew Places.' Erasmus also made use of another geographical dictionary, the *De nominibus locorum*, at that time generally, but wrongly, ascribed to Jerome; cf CWE 50 xvi n11. In his great edition of Jerome Erasmus discusses the spurious writings attributed to Jerome, for which see the preface II (1516) part 1 CWE 61 67–82.

76 On the *Catholicon* see *Methodus* n40. Eberhard of Béthune (twelfth century), named *Graecista*, wrote a grammar in verse, *Graecismus*, in which he explained Latin words derived from Greek. His work is often ridiculed by Erasmus; cf eg Epp 26:100, 31:55 and 93, 56:37 and *Antibarbari* CWE 23 36. Isidore of Seville (AD 560–636) wrote an encyclopedic work, the *Etymologiae* or *Origines*, which offered an explanation of many terms. Jerome wrote a book, *Liber interpretationis Hebraicorum nominum* 'On Hebrew Names': names found in both Testaments are listed alphabetically with meanings given. In the preface to this work Jerome acknowledges precedents under the names of Josephus and Philo, but claims to be 'building anew an old edifice,' PL 23 771–2. In fact, the work appears to be primarily a translation of existing materials; cf *Patrology* IV 228.

*the allegorical explanation of stories*, especially those that look towards good conduct. You might, for example, apply the story of Tantalus to the rich man brooding over and gaping at his wealth, and yet not enjoying it, or the story of Phaethon to the dangerous temerity of one who assumes a magistracy though he is unsuited to bearing office.[77] There should also be *practice in fables, in comparisons*, on which I have published something;[78] further, *and with respect to rhetoric, those parts especially that treat 'essential questions,' propositions, proofs, amplifications* **[42]** – all of which Fabius treats very thoroughly[79] – *and* that discuss the twin *emotions*, one of which, the gentler, is called *ἤθη*, the other, more severe, is called *πάθη* – about these no one wrote more carefully than Aristotle.[80] *For* a practical knowledge of *these things* especially *determine*s judgment, *something that is of particular importance in every kind of study. And since the theological profession rests rather on emotions* **[43]** *than on clever arguments, which even in pagan philosophers the pagans themselves ridicule, and Paul denounces in a Christian – and in more than one place* **[44]** *– it will be well to be* vigorously *practised in this field throughout youth, so that later you might be able to engage more skilfully in discussing theological allegories and commonplaces*. In allegory Origen was most felicitous, in commonplaces Chrysostom most

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77 For a biblical narrative of the rich man see Luke 12:16–20. Classical literature also had its narratives of the rich man; cf Horace *Odes* 2.18, where Tantalus becomes the type of the rich man (2.18.36–8). For the story of Tantalus, condemned to hunger and thirst in the midst of food and water he cannot enjoy, see Homer *Odyssey* 11.582–92. For Phaethon, who against his father's best judgment attempted to drive the chariots of the sun across the sky, only to crash to the earth, see Ovid *Metamorphoses* 2.1–328. These images are found elsewhere in Erasmus' writings as narratives of avarice and of youth incapable of governing; cf respectively *De copia* CWE 24 610 and *Institutio principis christiani* CWE 27 212. Phaethon and Tantalus appear together again later in the *Ratio*; cf 675 with n980.

78 Erasmus refers to his work *Parabolae*, published in 1514 and translated in CWE 23 135–277; cf *Ratio* 667 with n941.

79 Fabius, ie Quintilian.

80 Aristotle discusses *ethos* and *pathos* in his *Rhetoric* 2.1–17 and *Poetics* 6 and 14–15. Cf also the long discussion in Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 6.2.1–36. Erasmus finds several occasions to define and discuss the Greek *pathos* and the Latin *affectus*, eg *De taedio Iesu* CWE 70 59; the annotations on Romans CWE 56 56, 64, 204 (cf n4), 222–3; Ep 2260:157–326; see further *Methodus* nn17 and 43 and 'New Testament Scholarship' 325 with n1379.

abundant.[81] *Augustine*, in *On Order* book 1,[82] *saw this, if I am not mistaken, when he bids his Licentius to return to his liberal studies from which he was then preparing to depart, because studies of this sort make the intellect more vigorous and lively in approaching also other subjects* and the serious disciplines. At[83] the same time, Augustine counts a knowledge of poetry among the liberal arts. But it will be better, I think, because of those disposed to dispute, to add the words of Augustine himself. He says, 'You must return to those verses. For education in the liberal arts – at least if it is modest and limited – makes its lovers keener, more persistent, more prepared to embrace the truth, so that they seek it more passionately, follow it more faithfully, and, finally, cling to it more dearly.'[84] Thus Augustine.

*Otherwise, if anyone is imbued only with those silly, troublesome, and jejune little rules* – those, say, *of dialectic or*, more truly, *as it is now* generally *taught, of sophistry (which itself*, for all that, *they make into one thing after another every day with their new* and fabricated *problems) – one turns out, indeed, to be unconquered in debate; but in treating divine literature*, in preaching the sacred word, *God immortal! how flat we see they are, how frigid, indeed, how lifeless*! The chief function of these was to set hearts afire! *If anyone seeks* an example *of this*, let him read the homily of Origen on Abraham, who had been ordered to sacrifice his son. In this story a type and pattern are set before our eyes, showing that the strength of faith is more powerful than all human affections.[85]

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81 Cf *Enchiridion* CWE 66 69, where Erasmus describes Origen as 'by far the predominant figure' after the apostle Paul in 'opening up certain sources of allegory.' Cf also CWE 66 34 and Ep 181:45–8. Erasmus characterizes Chrysostom elsewhere also by his fondness for commonplaces; cf eg Ep 1558:275–8, dedicatory letter for the Greek edition of Chrysostom's *De sacerdotio*, (1525); and *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* CWE 71 68. On commonplaces in general see *Methodus* nn45 and 105.

82 in *On Order* book 1] Added in *1520*

83 At ... Thus Augustine.] Added in *1520*

84 Augustine *De ordine* 1.8.24. For the context see *Methodus* n46.

85 Cf Origen *In Genesim homiliae* 8.2–6 (on Gen 22:1–14). Cf the much briefer analysis in *Methodus* 444 with n97. The expression 'this story … is set before our eyes' points to the rhetorical force of vivid description. Cf the portrait of Chrysostom as a model preacher, who 'sets before the eyes' the 'hidden meaning of a passage,' Ep 1800:169–70; also ER Gal 3:1: 'Before your very eyes Christ was once portrayed,' a translation reflected in his paraphrase CWE 42 108 and preferred in his annotation on the verse (*ante quorum oculos*). Pointing to the value of allegory, Erasmus observes: '… sacred things have more majesty if they are brought

It may be worth the trouble to consider carefully the details[86] and with what and with how many devices the father's mind is assailed again and again. 'Take your son,' he says. Is there a parent whom the very term 'son' would not cause to waver when he heard it?[87] But to make this battering ram the more effective, he adds, 'only begotten';[88] and not content with this, he continued, 'whom you love.' This could have seemed enough to assault the breast of any man. There is added the name of the son, 'Isaac,' something extraordinarily pleasant to paternal feeling. Herein also the memory of the divine promise is aroused afresh, the promise where he had heard, 'In Isaac will your seed be named,' and, 'In Isaac will the promise be yours.'[89] This[90] was a race that felt, beyond any other, parental love[91] towards children. This most excellent man desired posterity; no hope of this remained if Isaac was cut off, for through him alone would posterity come. And yet God[92] does not simply order him to be slain but commands that he be sacrificed, so that feelings of parental devotion continually torture the old man's mind in the midst of the preparations. Many and heavy are the weights of the temptation. Over and above all these, he is ordered to ascend a lofty mountain at which he arrived only on the third day, so that for a long time the mind of the father was vexed with changing thoughts, human affection drawing him one way, the divine command urging him another. As they were going along, the boy, laden with the wood with which he was supposed to be burned, addressing his father who was carrying the fire and the sword, says, 'My father,' and the father replies, 'What is it, son?' At this point what a giant battering ram of paternal[93] love do we suppose struck the heart of the old man? Indeed, who

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before the eyes … the idea … is at once placed before the eyes as though portrayed in a picture …,' *Ratio* 637 with n770. The point is also made in *Ecclesiastes* 3; cf CWE 68 808.

86 Cf Origen *In Genesim homiliae* 8.1: 'In individual details one will find a treasury, if one knows how to dig deeply.'

87 when he heard it?] Added in *1522*

88 'only begotten'] First in *1523*, corresponding to the reading of the Vulgate of Gen 22:2; previously, 'most beloved,' following Origen *In Genesim homiliae* 8.2

89 For the first citation see Gen 21:12. Erasmus evidently takes the second citation from Origen's homily (8.2), where Origen appears to echo such passages as Heb 11:18 and Gal 3:16.

90 This ... children.] Added in *1520*

91 'Parental love': φιλόστοργος. On this word see CWE 56 332 and 64–5.

92 God] First in *1522*; previously 'he'

93 paternal] Added in *1522*

would not be moved to pity by the simple sincerity of the boy's submission to the father when he says, 'Here is the fire and the wood, but where is the sacrificial victim?'

Consider now, I beg you, the strength and firmness with which the faith of Abraham, tested in so many ways, followed orders to the end. He does not talk back to God,[94] he does not complain about the reliability of the promise, he does not lament his childlessness among his friends and relatives – for by such actions grief is somehow generally alleviated. Sighting in the distance the designated place, he bids his attendants stay where they are so that no one should thwart him as he fulfilled his orders. He loads[95] the wood on his son, he himself places the pile on the altar, he himself binds his son and places him on the wood to be sacrificed and consumed. He draws back his arm, brandishes his sword, ready to cut the throat of his only son, in whom lay all hope of the posterity he earnestly loved – had it not been that suddenly the voice of an angel restrained the old man's right hand.

Origen's discourse on this passage is fuller and more finely wrought, whether with greater pleasure to the reader or greater profit, I hardly know, though he is, for the moment, engaged only with the historical sense.[96] He does for the divine books exactly what Donatus does for the comedies of Terence in laying bare the intent of the poet.[97] Would anyone see such things who had never applied himself to the more refined literature, who had scarcely tasted the precepts of grammar (and at that, from authors ungrammatical), then – soon hurried off to thorny arguments and dry and

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94 'Does not talk back': *non responsat*. Cf the annotation on Rom 9:20 ('that you should reply to God'), where Erasmus notes that the verb is appropriately used of unwilling servants talking back to their masters.

95 'Loads': *onerat*. Alexander Dalzell has suggested that *onerat* may be a mistake for *exonerat*: 'He removes the wood from his son.'

96 Ie the literal meaning of the narrative, the author's supposed intent. Though Origen very occasionally pauses to explore the figurative meaning of a detail, he explicitly refuses to explore the 'mystery' in the detail of the third day; cf *In Genesim homiliae* 8.4.

97 Donatus, a grammarian of the fourth century AD, wrote a commentary on Terence; the extant commentary is an abridgement compiled from marginal scholia in manuscripts of Terence (*editio princeps* c 1490). It is a line-by-line commentary, noting figures of speech, meaning of words and phrases, and clarifying syntax – in this way 'laying bare the meaning of the poet.' Cf 'New Testament Scholarship 52 with n227. For Donatus and Diomedes (505 n74 above) as grammarians see *Ratio* 656 with n882.

troublesome questions[98] – spent the rest of his life in these? I could show with innumerable examples how insipid, not to say ridiculous, are the trifles and absurdities uttered by certain people whenever some saint is to be celebrated with a eulogy, or when a hymn or some other written text is to be used that calls for brilliance and emotion. To theologians of this kind we owe certain hymns and songs commonly called 'sequences,' which no educated person reads without either laughter or nausea.[99]

For the present, however, it is my concern not to ridicule anyone's ignorance but to invite young men to the best system of study. Only, I shall say this in general: *if anyone seeks some ready proof of this, let him place those ancient theologians, Origen, Basil*, Chrysostom, *Jerome* **[47]** *beside these more recent ones*, and *let him compare them*.[100] *He will see there a sort of golden river flowing, here some shallow streams, neither very pure nor much like their source* **[48]**. There,[101] the oracles of eternal truth thunder forth, here, you hear the trifling fabrications of men, which, the more closely you investigate the more they vanish like dreams. There[102] you will make for the harbour of evangelical truth by a

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98 A reference, evidently, to the *quaestiones*, the use of which became one of the prevailing methods of education in the medieval university. For the various kinds and contexts of 'questions' see Rashdall *Universities of Europe* 446, 490–5; and Hilde de Ridder-Symoens *A History of the University in Europe I: Universities in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge 1992) 396, 410–11.

99 The 'sequence': 'In the Roman rite a musical setting of rhymed poetry with paired lines, occurring after the Alleluia verse and before the Gospel in the Mass for certain important feasts' NCE 13 1 'sequence.' Erasmus composed a sequence for his own 'Liturgy of Loreto'; cf the *Liturgia Virginis Matris* CWE 69 88–90 with n10. On sequences see also *De concordia* CWE 65 207 with n391.

100 On the contrast between the 'ancient' and the 'more recent' or 'modern' theologians see CWE 56 13 n7, Ep 1211:467–83, *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* CWE 71 74, and 'New Testament Scholarship' 4. While Chrysostom is mentioned twice in the *Methodus*, he becomes increasingly prominent in the sequence of editions of the *Ratio* from 1519 to 1523 (cf *Methodus* n114). In the dedication of the 1530 edition of Chrysostom to Christoph von Stadion, this ancient bishop is called 'that mellifluous preacher and indefatigable herald of Christ,' Ep 2359:11–12; and at the end of the *Ratio* (*1519*) Erasmus substitutes the name of Chrysostom for that of Jerome found in the parallel passage of the *Methodus* (*1516*) as the paradigmatic theologian; compare *Ratio* 711 with *Methodus* 453. But Erasmus did observe Chrysostom's 'long-windedness' and his 'rather annoying wordiness'; cf respectively Ep 1800:201 and Allen Ep 2526:14–15. For an extended evaluation (*1527*) see Ep 1800:135–219.

101 There ... flattery.] Added in *1520*

102 There…Charybdis.] This sentence appeared only in Froben March 1520.

direct course, here you will be struggling among the tortuous intricacies of human questions, or dashing against the Scylla of pontifical power or upon the Syrtes of scholastic dogmas or upon the Symplegades of divine and human laws – unless you prefer to speak of the Charybdis.[103] There an edifice resting upon the solid foundation of the Scriptures rises aloft, here a frame no less vacuous than vast is raised up to an enormous height, built upon the cunning but unreliable arguments of men, or even upon fawning flattery. *There,* as *in the most fruitful gardens, you will be* both delighted and *filled to satiety, while here you will be torn and wracked among* sterile *thorns. There all is full of grandeur, here nothing is noble, while many things are mean and hardly worthy of the dignity of theology* – to refrain,[104] meanwhile, from a comparison of moral character.

*But if one must delay a little longer in profane literature, I should prefer that at all events one do so in literature that is more closely related to the mystic books. I am aware with what arrogance some despise poetry as a subject worse than childish, with what arrogance they despise rhetoric and all good literature, as it is called – and is* **[49]**. *And yet this* literature, however loathsome to them, *has given us those distinguished theologians, whom we are now more inclined to neglect than* either *to understand* or to imitate. If anyone asks for proof of this, let him consider how many who have tried to emulate this poetic or grammatical faculty (as they say) – whatever it is – have not succeeded. I refrain from names to avoid offence, though[105] every day they betray themselves by the books they publish. If they condemn the more refined literature why are they so anxious to aspire to refinement of speech? If they approve it why do they discourage from it those who would, with more success, embrace it? The writings of the prophets everywhere abound in poetic figures and tropes. *Christ clothed almost all his teachings in comparisons* **[51]**; *this belongs especially*

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103 Scylla and Charybdis are the proverbial twin hazards that threatened sailors travelling through the straits of Messina between Italy and Sicily; cf Homer *Odyssey* 12.73–110. The Syrtes are the treacherous sandbanks north of the coast of Libya; cf Acts 27:17. The Symplegades (ie the 'Clashing Rocks') are the fabled floating rocks at the mouth of the Black Sea, which crushed ships that endeavoured to pass between them, until the rocks were stabilized after the Argonauts had successfully sailed through them. 'Divine and human laws' here is an allusion to canon and civil law embodied in the two codes *corpus iuris canonici* and *corpus iuris civilis*, for a brief description of which see Berlioz *Sources* 127 and 170–4.

104 to refrain ... character.] Added in *1520*

105 though ... embrace it?] Added in *1520*

*to poets. Augustine* did not think it a childish exercise to note *the figures of the rhetoricians in* the writings of *the prophets and the Epistles of Paul* **[52]** – also the pauses in the discourse and the full periods. He[106] did this, moreover, not in the books he entitled 'On Grammar' or 'On Dialectic' but in *On Christian Doctrine*, and what is that if not theological? As a bishop he was not ashamed in the same work to seek from the grammarians a difference of pronunciation and syntax.[107] I shall not mention here that men worthy of immortality treated the mysteries of Christ in poetic verses – Gregory of Nazianzus, Damasus, Prudentius,[108] Paulinus, Juvencus.[109] The apostle *Paul himself* more than once made *use* of *the witness of poets*.[110] *Where, in these* writings, pray tell,

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106 He ... syntax.] In this form, first in *1520*; in *1519* the passage read: 'In the books *On Christian Doctrine* Augustine did not think it a childish exercise to note ... the full periods; to seek from the grammarians a difference of pronunciation and syntax.'

107 For 'figures,' 'pauses,' and 'periods' see Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 4.7.11–21; for 'pronunciation' (including 'articulation') and 'syntax' see ibidem 3.2.2–4. For the dates of composition of this work see *Methodus* n6 and *Ratio* n830. Augustine was ordained coadjutor bishop of Hippo Regius in 395.

108 Prudentius] Added in *1520*. A Christian Latin poet, Prudentius (c 348–after 405) addressed in poetic form theological and apologetic issues. He is most widely known for his fourteen hymns devoted to martyrs, comprising the *Peristephanon*. The *editio princeps* of his work was published in 1492. Erasmus dedicated a commentary on Prudentius' hymns for Christmas and Epiphany to Margaret More (Roper), daughter of Thomas More, CWE 29 173–218; the dedicatory epistle, Ep 1404 'To the virtuous maiden Margaret Roper,' is dated Christmas 1524 (for 1523; cf CWE 29 173n10). Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 220 with nn876 and 881.

109 **Gregory** (c 329–90), bishop of Nazianzus and, briefly in 381, of Constantinople (cf *Methodus* n114), wrote classical Greek poetry with Christian themes, including several autobiographical poems – altogether some nineteen thousand verses; cf Denis Molais Meehan *St Gregory of Nazianzus: Three Poems* FOTC 75 (Washington DC 1987) 19. Aldo Manuzio had published an edition of the *Carmina* of Gregory (Greek text, Latin translation) in 1504, though the *editio princeps* of the *Opera omnia* was not published until 1550. **Damasus**, bishop of Rome (366–84), at whose request Jerome had undertaken the revision of the Gospels (cf *Methodus* n27), wrote epigrams as inscriptions to memorialize martyrs. **Paulinus** (355–431), a native of Aquitaine in Gaul, became bishop of Nola (near Naples) between 404 and 413, where with his wife, Therasia, he had founded a monastery. Thirty of his poems are extant (*editio princeps* 1515); cf *The Poems of St Paulinus of Nola* trans and annot P.G. Walsh, Ancient Christian Writers 40 (New York 1975). **Juvencus** wrote a paraphrase in Latin verse on the Gospels (*editio princeps* 1490); cf *Apologia* n55.

110 Cf Acts 17:28; 1 Cor 15:33; Titus 1:12.

*is there anything that,* however clever and learned, *reflects Aristotle, that reflects* the ungodly *Averroës*? **[54]** *Where is any mention of first and second intentions*, of the figures of syllogisms, *of formalities or quiddities or haecceities – with which everything* in their discussions *is stuffed*?[111]

Do those early Christian writers discourse with little wit because they do not dissect everything into corollaries and conclusions? Or because they do not say what they are about to say before they say it, and again point out that they have said what they sometimes did not say? Or because they do not cut to pieces every discourse, sliced up almost word for word? This part is divided into three, the first of these into four, and of these four, every one into three further: here the first, there the second.[112] It is precisely these things – the very dullest – that seem to us erudite. Accustomed to these from boyhood, we comprehend only what has been dismembered piecemeal in this fashion. *In other professions it is* regarded as (and is) *a most excellent thing for each person to reflect his own principal authorities. Virgil imitated Homer*, Theocritus, and Hesiod; Horace imitated Pindar and Anacreon; similarly, *Avicenna* imitated *Galen*, and Galen Hippocrates;[113] Cicero imitated Demosthenes, and Xenophon Plato; *Aristotle*, who discussed everything, imitated *various men depending on the* various *subjects*; Theophrastus, Themistius, and Averroës imitated Aristotle.[114] *Why have we alone dared to abandon in our entire method* of

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111 For the figures of syllogisms see *Ratio* n67; for the other terms see *Methodus* n55.

112 The medieval penchant for complex division (*divisio*) finds ample illustration in the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas and in his commentary on the *Sententiae* of Peter Lombard.

113 Galen … Hippocrates] Added in *1520*. Galen admired Hippocrates and derived much of his medical principles as well as his anatomical descriptions from the Hippocratic corpus, becoming in effect the systematizer of 'Hippocratism'; on the Hippocratic corpus see *Methodus* n10.

114 The allusions here go beyond those in the corresponding passage of the *Methodus*. Virgil's debt to Theocritus, a Greek pastoral poet (early third century BC) is evident in the *Eclogues*; in the *Georgics* he offers advice for farmers on the proper care of land and animals, as Hesiod (fl c 700 BC) had done in his *Works and Days*. Horace' *Odes* often adopt the metres, sometimes the themes, of his Greek predecessors, who were masters of the lyric, especially Sappho, from the island of Lesbos (second half of the seventh century BC) and Anacreon, from the island of Teos (mid-sixth century BC); but Horace also wrote victory odes of a political character, as Pindar (b c 518 BC) from Beoetia had done for the victors in the athletic contests. The comparison of Cicero (106–43 BC) to Demosthenes (384–322 BC) emerged in antiquity, encouraged by Cicero himself, who spoke of his fourteen orations against Mark Antony as 'Philippics,' an allusion to the famous speeches of Demosthenes against Philip of Macedon; cf Cicero *Discours* 19:

discourse *the principal representatives of our philosophy*? For what is so unlike, so discordant with the style of the prophets, Christ, and the apostles as that in which those who follow Thomas and Scotus now dispute about divine things. *Augustine thinks it was fortunate that he* had *encountered Plato above all* when he was still being led about by various errors, because *Plato's doctrines come so close to the teaching of Christ, and a transition from what is closely allied* and akin *is more easily made* **[57]**.

I should *not*, indeed, say these things *because I condemn the studies that we now* generally *see established in the public schools, provided they are treated* in a sensible and modest way, *and not alone.* But what sort of a thing is it to be afraid to profess oneself a theologian unless one has Aristotelian philosophy; to declare oneself even the standard-bearer in the rank of theologians, when one is without grammar, without rhetoric, without knowledge of all the ancient and more refined learning, and[115] to make confident assertions with great arrogance about the very things of which Paul did not dare to speak a word when he returned from the third heaven.[116] Accordingly, if they wish, *let the few whom Jove the just has loved – to use the words of Virgil*[117] – and who have the time to lose some part of their youth, *embrace those studies, too. I am educating the* theological recruit, *an ordinary one* and one in haste.

*And yet, to speak my mind freely, it seems to me by no means safe for one marked out for theology to grow old in profane studies, especially those studies that are somewhat foreign to the enterprise. Those who coat their palate and tongue with wormwood taste the wormwood in whatever they then eat or drink, and to those that*

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*Philippiques* I–IV ed and trans André Boulanger and Pierre Wuilleumier, Collection des universités de France, série latine 154 (Paris 1966) 30–1. Xenophon (c 430–354 BC), a contemporary of Plato (c 429–347 BC), wrote, in addition to his historical narratives, some works that recall those of Plato: an *Apology* (Socrates' defence before the jury) and a *Symposium* (written shortly after Plato's *Symposium*), while his *Memorabilia* contain dialogues in the Socratic manner. Theophrastus (c 342–258 BC), a companion and pupil of Aristotle, wrote extensively on logic, metaphysics, and natural science, continuing Aristotle's method of discussion and observation. Themistius (c AD 317–88), a convinced pagan from western Asia Minor, wrote paraphrases on numerous works of Aristotle, sometimes inserting into the paraphrases his own clarifications; Erasmus appealed to Themistius' work as a precedent for his own *Paraphrases*; cf CWE 42 xvii and nn39, 40. For Averroës see *Methodus* n54; for Virgil and Homer, Avicenna and Galen, Aristotle and 'various men,' *Methodus* n56.

115 and ... heaven.] Added in *1520*

116 Cf 2 Cor 12:1–4.

117 Cf Virgil *Aeneid* 6.129–30.

*are out in the sun for a very long time, whatever they then see presents itself with the hue that they themselves* convey *when the blurring of the lens has impaired their vision. So to those who have spent a good part of their lives in*[118] the Bartoluses and Balduses, in the Averroës, in the Holcots, Bricots, and Tartarets,[119] *in sophistical quibbling*, in hotchpotch *summulae* and collections – *to these divine literature does not have its true taste, but the taste they bring to it. For though it may be nice in treating divine literature to sprinkle it now and then with those exotic spices, so to speak, yet it seems utterly absurd when you are treating a subject vastly different from all worldly wisdom to prattle on about nothing except Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Averroës, and authors further beyond the pale* **[61]**, *to be struck with amazement at their opinions as though these were oracles*, to protect[120] in earnest the dogmas of our religion by the determinations and the demonstrations of these when, in the judgment of the most distinguished men, it is from such authors that heresies have arisen and with their weapons especially that heretics assault us. 'Take away from the heretics,' says Tertullian, 'the wisdom of the pagans, so that they base their inquiries on the Scriptures, and they will

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118 in ... collections] In the *Methodus*, 'in Bartolus, Averroës, Aristotle, and sophistical quibbling'; in the *Ratio 1519*, 'in the Bartoluses, Balduses, in the Averroës and the Duranduses, in sophistical quibbling'; in *1520*, 'in the Bartoluses, Balduses, in the Averroës and the Duranduses, in sophistical quibbling, in hotchpotch *summulae* and collections'; in *1522* and *1523*, 'in the Bartoluses and Balduses, in the Averroës, in the Holcots, Bricots, and Tartarets, in sophistical quibbling, in hotchpotch *summulae* and collections.' On Erasmus' penchant for pluralizing names see eg the annotation on Rom 1:16 ('for I do not feel ashamed of the gospel') and *De immensa Dei misericordia* CWE 70 123. On *summulae* and on the names listed here see the next note.

119 The names of several of these scholars appear in the *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* and have been annotated there: Bartolus (1314–after 1357) and Baldus (1319 or 1327–1400) CWE 71 39 n6, and 48; William Durandus (1230–96) ibidem 71 n30; Robert Holcot (d 1349) ibidem 38 n4; Pierre Tartaret (d 1522), whose publications included commentaries on Aristotle and the *summulae* of Petrus Hispanus, ibidem 78 and Ep 1581 n80. For Holcot and Thomas Bricot see also *De conscribendis epistolis* CWE 25 17 with nn13 and 14, and Ep 1304:72 with nn11 and 12; and for Bricot (d 1516) see *Parabolae* CWE 23 239 n24 and CEBR I 199–200, where his numerous books on logic are listed. The *summulae* were compendia widely used in medieval education, of which one of the more notorious was the *Summulae logicales* of Petrus Hispanus (1205–77; Pope John XXI, 1276–7), while Thomas Bricot edited (1487) the *Textus summularum* of Jean Buridan (1300–58). For a discussion of the *Summulae logicales* of Petrus Hispanus, with an excerpt, see Piltz *Medieval Learning* 234, 265–8. For *summulae* and 'collections' see *Methodus* n102.

120 to protect ... theologians.] Added in *1522*

not be able to stand.'[121] But today nothing else receives more attention from theologians. *Surely this is not to season the* celestial *philosophy of Christ but to make it something quite othe*r! Chrysippus is censured because one could find entire tragedies in the commentaries he wrote on logic.[122] Someone might more justly censure us than him if one should see that more than the whole of Aristotle is found in the commentaries of the theologians.

*But if anyone cries out that apart from* a precise knowledge of *these one is not a theologian, I, at all events, shall take comfort from the examples of so many distinguished men – Chrysostom*, Cyprian,[123] *Jerome, Ambrose, Augustine, Clement* **[62]**. I should prefer to be a midget rhetorician with these than to be a theologian along with some who imagine they are supermen. I shall take comfort from the example, *finally, of Peter and Paul, who were not only not versed in this knowledge but even condemn it sometimes* **[63]**. At least it is clear that they never used it.

As Seneca says, 'Some things one ought to have learned; one ought not to be learning them.'[124] But what sort of sight is it for an eighty-year-old theologian to do nothing in the schools but either teach or practise the exercises in dialectic and philosophy appropriate to a forum of debate? To chatter away endlessly here with no tongue to preach the gospel of Christ, and right to the end of life to do nothing else than dispute – not to say prattle.[125] Those who prepare for battle are trained above all in exercises that most assuredly lead

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121 Cf Tertullian *De resurrectione mortuorum* 3.6. Beatus Rhenanus published the *editio princeps* of Tertullian in 1521. The *De resurrectione mortuorum* was included in this edition. Cf *Patrology* II 253–4. Since in the *Annotations* Tertullian is referenced very little before *1527* and only minimally in *1522* (published in February), the several citations in the *1522* edition of the *Ratio* (published in June) point to Erasmus' growing familiarity with the Carthaginian. Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 212 with n817, 309 with n1289, and 312 with n1304. Cf also *Ratio* 695 with n1077.

122 Cf Diogenes Laertius *Vitae philosophorum* 7.7.180: '... in one of his treatises [Chrysippus] copied out nearly the whole of Euripides *Medea*'; cf the translation Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, trans, rev, and with new introductory material by R.D. Hicks, 2 vols, Loeb Classical Library 184 (Cambridge MA 1972) II 289. Chrysippus of Soli (280–207 BC) succeeded Cleanthes as head of the Stoic school in 232 BC.

123 Cyprian's name here may reflect Erasmus' work on his own edition of Cyprian (Froben 1520). Initial preparations for this edition probably began as early as the summer of 1518; cf Ep 1000 introduction; and *Ratio* nn1077 and 1079.

124 Cf Seneca *Epistulae morales* 88.2.

125 not to say prattle.] Added in *1522*

to victory. Athletic trainers mould and shape the future athlete – selected while yet a boy – for the contests that lie ahead, and direct everything to their goal. Now, the chief goal of theologians is to explain prudently divine literature, to give an account of the faith and not of frivolous questions, to discourse seriously and effectually on godliness, to elicit tears, to set our souls aflame for heavenly things.[126] For this let our future theologian rehearse from the very beginning of his studies rather than grow old in alien literature.

*It would be more to the point*, in my opinion, *to hand down to our young tyro doctrines reduced* to a compendium and *to their chief particulars, and this above all from the Gospel* sources, *then from the apostolic Epistles, so that everywhere he might have clearly defined target points*[127] *with which to set in line* his reading. *As examples of such teachings, I note the following few*: that Christ, the heavenly teacher, *established in the world a new* sort of *people that depended entirely upon heaven* **[65]** *and, distrusting all the supports of this world, was rich in a different sort of way, was wise, noble, powerful, happy in some different way*, a people *that found its happiness* **[66]** *by despising all* the *things* the common crowd admires.[128] *These were a people* **[67]** *who did not know envy* or spite – *no doubt because their eye was sound*;[129] *who did not know* impure *desire inasmuch as they were of their own accord* castrated, practising in the flesh the life of angels;[130] who did not know divorce, evidently either bearing or correcting every evil;[131] who did not know the taking of oaths, as people who neither distrusted anyone nor

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126 Erasmus formulated the goal of theology in a similar way in the preface to his edition of Hilary (1523); cf Ep 1334:218–34 and 244–7 with n27; both statements were censured by the Paris theologians (cf *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* CWE 82 263–6 with nn937 and 941).

127 'target points': *scopos*, plural, but in the singular just below; cf *Ratio* n147.

128 Cf Matt 6:25–34.

129 Cf Matt 6:22–3; Luke 11:34; and on the 'sound eye,' *Methodus* n68.

130 Cf Matt 19:12, 22:30. *Castratus* 'castrated' replaced *eunuchus*, the Vulgate expression adopted in the *Methodus*. Erasmus explained the distinction in the annotation on Matt 19:12 (*qui facti sunt*), begun in *1516* with additions in *1519* and *1527*, an annotation in which Erasmus aimed a sharp arrow at both medieval exegesis and contemporary monasticism. On the 'angelic life' as one of self-denial, suggestive of the monastic life, see the paraphrase on Matt 3:1 with n5 CWE 45 58, also *Paraclesis* 413 with n56.

131 Cf Matt 5:31–2; 1 Cor 13:7. A few comments in the *1516* annotation on Matt 19:8 (*ad duriciem cordis*) that challenged the church's accepted position on divorce preceded a major discussion of the subject in the *1519* annotation on 1 Cor 7:39 (*liberata est a lege, cui autem vult, nubat*); the discussion of *1519* is summarized in 'New Testament Scholarship'; cf 138 with n572. 'Bearing or correcting': cf the similar alternative in the paraphrase on Matt 19:9–11 CWE 45 272.

deceived anyone;[132] who did not know the love of money, as their treasure had been laid up in heaven;[133] who were not titillated by vainglory, as people who referred all things to the glory of Christ alone;[134] who did not know ambition inasmuch as they were people *who, the greater anyone was, the more he submitted himself to all* on account of Christ;[135] *who, not even when provoked knew how to become angry or to curse*, much less to take revenge – in fact, *they strove to do well even to those who had harmed them*;[136] whose manner of life was so innocent that it was approved even by the pagans;[137] *who had been, as it were, born again, refashioned into the purity and the simplicity of babes*;[138] *who, like the birds* and the lilies, *lived from day to day*;[139] *among whom there was the greatest harmony, exactly like that among the members of the body* in[140] *whom mutual charity made all things common*,[141] so that when some good befell, assistance was given to those in need, while anything evil, if it occurred, was either

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132 Cf Matt 5:33–7. 'Neither distrusted … nor deceived': similarly both in a *1519* addition to the annotation on Matt 5:37 (*his abundantius est*) and in the paraphrase on the same verse, CWE 45 107

133 Cf 1 Tim 6:10; Matt 6:19–21; Luke 12:33.

134 Cf 1 Cor 10:31.

135 Cf Matt 20:20–8; Mark 10:42–5; Luke 22:24–7; Mark 9:33–7; John 13:12–15. The phrase 'on account of Christ,' added in the *Ratio*, sharpens the allusion to Eph 5:21. The paraphrase on Acts 6:1 identifies the 'first case of ambition in the church' CWE 50 46.

136 Cf Rom 12:14–21; Matt 5:21–2, 38–44. In a *1519* addition to the annotation on Matt 5:22 (*qui dixerit fratri suo racha*) Erasmus attempted to explain the sequence 'anger, Racha, fool' found in the verse, a sequence illuminated in his paraphrase on the verse (cf CWE 45 98–9 with n72) and, indeed, almost realized in an encounter he himself had with Nicolaas Baechem; cf Ep 1162:41–60. For the interesting addition to the annotation in *1527* cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 300 with nn1263, 1264.

137 Perhaps an allusion to such passages as Matt 5:14–16 and 1 Cor 10:32. Erasmus may also have in mind early noncanonical literature, which reveals the Christians' self-perception that their behaviour in some respects won the approval of pagans; cf Tertullian *Apologeticus* 3.1–3. There is evidence from other sources that pagans noted the moral improvement in the lives of Christians; cf Robert L. Wilkin *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven 1984) 79–81. Cf also Pliny the Younger Ep 10.96: Pliny, after examination found no impropriety in the lives of Christians except their 'superstition.'

138 Cf 1 Pet 1:23–2:2; also Matt 19:13–15; Mark 10:13–16; Luke 18:15–17; and see *Methodus* n72.

139 Cf Matt 6:25–33; Luke 12:22–31.

140 in] First in *1520*; previously, 'among'

141 Cf 1 Cor 12:12–26; Acts 2: 44–5, 4:32; also *Adagia* I i 1.

removed or at least alleviated by the obligations of kindness. These were people who, as the heavenly Spirit was their teacher, were so wise,[142] *who so lived* according to the example of Christ, *that they were the salt and light of the world*, a city set on a hill and visible to all around;[143] who, whatever they were able to do, this they were able to do in the interest of helping all; *for whom* this *life was of no consequence*, while *death was to be desired* because of their longing for immortality;[144] *who feared neither tyranny nor death nor* even *Satan* himself, *relying on the help of Christ alone*;[145] *who* in every respect *conducted themselves in such a way that they were always girded, as it were, and ready for that final day*.[146] [I note] that this is the target point[147] set out by Christ to which all the affairs of Christians must be directed – granted, meanwhile, that we must bear with and encourage the weak until they make progress and,[148] in gradual stages unobserved, grow into the measure of the fullness of Christ.[149]

These are the new teachings of our founder, teachings that no company of philosophers has handed down. This was the new wine that was to be poured only into new skins.[150] These are the teachings through which we are born again from above – hence also Paul calls anyone who is in Christ a new

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142 Cf John 14:26; Luke 12:12; Matt 10:16.

143 Cf Matt 5:13–14.

144 Cf Phil 1:23, 3:8; 2 Cor 5:1–5.

145 Cf Rom 8:38–9; Matt 10:17–26; Phil 4:13.

146 Cf Matt 24:42–4; Luke 12:35–7. Assiduous copying from the *Methodus* will resume again at *Ratio* 677; cf *Methodus* 444.

147 'Target point': *scopum*, a transliteration of the Greek *σκοπός*, in the New Testament found only in Phil 3:14, where from *1516* Erasmus translated *praefixum signum* 'the mark set out ahead' in place of the Vulgate's *destinatum* 'appointed end.' See *Enchiridion* (1503) CWE 66 61 and 63 for the expressions '*Christum velut unicum scopum praefigas* 'Place Christ before you as the only goal,' and *unum Christum scopum nostrum* 'Christ our only goal.' *Scopus* is 'a favourite word of Erasmus,' found also in the plural (cf n127 above), carefully annotated in CWE 43 384–5 n43 (paraphrase on Phil 3:14). See also *Adagia* I x 30, where Erasmus defines *scopus*.

148 and ... fullness of Christ.] Added in *1520*

149 Cf Eph 4:13. On 'bearing with the weak' see Rom 14–15:1. Erasmus characteristically explains 'accommodating the weak' as corrective in intent, permitting time to effect change; cf the paraphrases on Rom14:1–15:1 CWE 42 77–83 and on Acts 15:19–20 CWE 50 98. The principle is reflected in the description just below of the 'third time period in salvation-history' (529–31). For the 'stages unobserved' by which the Christian grows into Christ see the paraphrase on Eph 4:13 CWE 43 331–2 (published early 1520).

150 Cf Matt 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37.

creature.[151] The Peripatetics hold to the principles of Aristotle, the Platonists to the doctrines of Plato, the Epicureans hold to the tenets of Epicurus; much more does it befit us to hold to the teachings of so great a founder.[152]

But in these teachings there is some variety because of the differences in persons and circumstances. Certain things our founder plainly forbids. The following belong to this category: among us there should not be divorce, jealousy, ambition, love of money, revenge, mistrust, disparagement. I shall soon point out a little more fully how much consideration and effort he has given to ensure that all such feelings are banished from the hearts of his disciples.[153] Certain things he plainly prescribes for everyone. In this category are the precepts about mutual love, about forgiving the faults of our brothers, about each one taking up his cross – which if you refuse to do, Christ does not acknowledge you as a disciple – about gentleness, when he says in the eleventh chapter of Matthew, 'Learn of me for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls' [11:29], about faith, which he demands everywhere, about kindness to all, and other precepts like these.[154]

Certain things he commends but does not require, enticing with a reward those who can fulfil them, without threatening punishment if they cannot. For in the nineteenth chapter of Matthew he calls eunuchs 'blessed' who have castrated and emasculated themselves on account of the kingdom of God; he does not call those unhappy who maintain a legitimate marriage in

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151 Cf 2 Cor 5:17. On the phrase 'born again from above' (*renascimur e supernis*) see John 3:3; and the paraphrase on John 3:3–5 CWE 46 45–6 with nn12 and 14; also the paraphrase on 1 Pet 2:11 (*caelesti generatione renati* 'reborn by a heavenly engendering') CWE 44 88. Cf also *Paraclesis* n64.

152 'Principles,' 'doctrines,' 'tenets,' 'teachings': *placita*, *decreta*, *scita*, *dogmata* – according to Seneca *Epistulae morales* 95.10, the first three terms are more or less equivalent to the Greek *δόγματα*. These four terms are frequent throughout the *Ratio*, and context has, to a great extent, determined which of the four English equivalents given here will render the Latin in any particular case; cf *Ratio* n259.

153 These vices have in general been mentioned in the course of the description just above of the Christian virtues. The promise 'soon to point out' is in fact fulfilled; cf 579–93.

154 For these precepts see: John 13:34–5 and Rom 13:8–10 (mutual love); Matt 18:15–35 and Luke 17:3–4 (forgiving one's brothers); Matt 16:24–7, Mark 8:34–8, Luke 9:23–6, also Matt 10: 32, Luke 12:8 (taking up the cross, acknowledged by Christ); Matt 21:18–22 and Mark 11:22–4 (faith); Matt 5:43–8 and Luke 6:27–36 (kindness to all).

purity and chastity.[155] Perhaps to this class belongs Christ's word to the young man, 'If you wish to be perfect, go, sell all that you possess, and come, follow me' [Matthew 19:21]. Actually, the saying seems to me rather to pertain to all Christians, every one of whom ought to be so minded that if the glory of Christ requires anything of this sort, he will gladly neglect everything – if indeed[156] by the word 'perfect' Christ denotes a Christian. That young man was an upright Jew; it remained that he should become a disciple of Christ and then follow the path of perfection. In human affairs nothing is truly perfect, but each ought to have in his particular condition a zeal for perfection. Certain things Christ disapproves and rejects as unworthy of him, as in the twelfth chapter of Luke, when he had been invited to divide an inheritance and said, 'Man, who appointed me as a judge or divider over you?' [12:14].

In some cases Christ dissimulates, as it were,[157] as though the matters do not pertain to him, or as though he is indifferent to them. A case in point is found in Matthew, the seventeenth[158] chapter. He asks Peter, 'Who owes tribute to kings, sons or strangers?' [17:25] – as though he were unskilled and inexperienced in these things, since they were things that pertained to the base condition of this world. And, similarly, though he spoke as if the tax was not owed, still he asks that a two-drachma piece be paid, yet not for all, but only for himself and for Peter.[159] There is another case in point in the twenty-second chapter of Matthew when Christ, who had been questioned with treacherous intent, whether it was right[160] to pay tribute to Caesar, asks

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155 Cf Matt 19:10–12, where the logion about eunuchs is framed by the qualification that not all are able to receive the saying. Eunuchs are not, however, called 'blessed' in those verses. Here in the *Ratio* 'unhappy' translates *infelices*, 'blessed' renders *beati*. *Felix* 'happy' and *felicitas* 'happiness' are frequently found in the *Paraphrases* as near synonyms for *beatus* 'blessed' and *beatitudo* 'blessedness; cf *Methodus* n66 and the annotation on Rom 4:9 ('does it remain only'), especially the *1535* addition, CWE 56 109–110 with n15. Cf *Ratio* n933.

156 if indeed] First in *1520*; previously, 'if, in fact.' Erasmus implies a reference to monks and hastens to make the point that the word 'perfect' applies to all Christians; cf the conclusion of the *Enchiridion*, CWE 66 127.

157 On the portrait of the dissimulating Christ in Erasmus' *Paraphrases* see Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* I 658–65 (= Jacques Chomarat 'Grammar and Rhetoric in the Paraphrases of the Gospels by Erasmus' ERSY 1 [1981] 61–8).

158 seventeenth] In *1519*, 'eighteenth'; corrected in *1520* to 'seventeenth'

159 Cf Matt 17:24–7.

160 was right] First in *Schoeffer 1519*; previously, 'is right'

that he be shown a coin, as though the coin were unknown to him.[161] When he had seen it, he asks, 'Whose image and superscription is this?' [22:20], as though this too he did not know. And his reply about rendering the tribute to Caesar is not without ambiguity: 'Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's' [22:21], as though to say,[162] 'If anything is owed to Caesar, pay it, but I am more concerned to admonish[163] you to give to God the things that are God's.'

In a very similar manner, he neither condemns nor openly absolves the woman taken in adultery in John the Evangelist but admonishes her not to commit the sin again.[164] He was unwilling to deprive necessary human laws of their own authority,[165] and yet he who had come to save all was unwilling to be the author of condemnation, at least as far as this lay in him. In[166] doing so he gave at the same time an example to those who would follow in the place of Christ, that they should be more eager to save sinners by their gentleness than to destroy them by their severity. Again, in Luke, when certain ones reported the novel and dreadful punishment inflicted upon the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their own sacrifices, he neither approves nor disapproves the severity of the laws but uses the story as an opportunity for warning: 'Do you think,' he says, 'that because they suffered such things these Galileans sinned beyond all the Galileans? No! I say to you, unless you regain your senses and repent,[167] you all will perish

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161 For the story see Matt 22:15–22; Mark 12:13–17; Luke 20:20–6. For the same example see *Methodus* n90. An annotation on Matt 22:21 (*reddite igitur Caesari*) added in *1519* likewise notes the dissimulation of Christ and the ambiguity of his response.

162 as though to say] Added in *1522*

163 'Admonish': *admonere*, as in Froben *1519* rather than *admovere* 'to move' in Holborn 196:12, apparently by mistake

164 Cf John 8:3–11. In his annotation on John 8:3 (*adducunt autem scribae et Pharisaei mulierem*) Erasmus acknowledged the slender textual support for the pericope but was 'unwilling to move it from its place' because it belonged to the text commonly received in the West, ASD VI-6 104:725–6. He maintained this position though he was compelled in the later editions of the annotation to revise radically the evidence he had assembled in *1516*.

165 A reference, apparently to the Old Testament law commanding adulterers to be stoned; see John 8:5; and for the law, Lev 20:10.

166 In ... severity.] Added in *1520*. That a repentant sinner should be treated with gentleness rather than with severity is a common theme in Erasmus' work; cf eg the portrait of Peter in the paraphrase on Acts 2:37–8 CWE 50 22.

167 'You regain your senses and repent': *resipueritis*. *Resipisco* appears to be Erasmus' preferred Latin word to translate the Greek *μετανοέω*; cf eg the indexes of Latin words cited in the volumes of *Paraphrases* CWE 42–50. But his use of the word in his biblical translation was not in fact without exception; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 202 with n788, 124, and 126 with n538.

likewise, just as those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them' [13:1–5].[168]

For understanding the sense of Scripture, some light will be shed from another source also, that is, if we consider not only *what is said* but also *the words* used, *by whom and to whom they are spoken, the time, the occasion, what precedes, and what follows*.[169] For one type of discourse befits John the Baptist, another Christ. The untrained populace is taught one thing, the apostles are taught another. Again, one thing is taught to the apostles while they are still untrained, another when they have now become formed and educated. One sort of reply is given to those who interrogate with an insidious design, another to those who inquire with sincere intent. Finally, the very sequence of the narrative discloses, on thorough investigation, the thought that is otherwise obscure. Many times a comparison of passages unravels the knot of a problem, when what is said somewhat obscurely at one point is repeated at another point quite clearly.

And since in almost all his discourse Christ speaks obliquely through figures and tropes,[170] the candidate for theology will search out with a keen nose what role[171] the speaker sustains – whether he speaks as head or members, shepherd or flock. For when Christ on the cross cries out to the Father, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Far from my salvation are

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168 Erasmus cites somewhat freely. With the sequence of stories found here (coin, adulterous woman, tower of Siloam) compare that in Ep 858:268–78 (August 1518).

169 The exegetical principle outlined here had been expressed in a different context in the *Methodus*; cf 446 with n103. The same principle is also expressed again in *Ratio* 680.

170 tropes] First in *Schoeffer 1519*; previously, *strophis* – perhaps an inadvertent error. In the context of the discussion of 'persons,' Erasmus turns here to the *persona* understood as a trope, since the language conveys 'obliquely' a concealed identity. Erasmus will offer later a more sustained and more conventional discussion of figures and tropes; see *Ratio* 632 with n745.

171 'Role': *personam*, often in what follows rendered simply by *persona*. In Erasmus' view, to recognize in biblical discourse the voice of the speaker is to have found an important clue to the interpretation of a passage. See eg his annotation on Rom 7:25 ('the grace of God'), also CWE 56 118, 191, 239, 279, 307; in all these passages Erasmus' exegesis depends to a greater or lesser degree on identifying the persona. In his exposition of the Psalms Erasmus articulates with considerable care the problems in identifying the personae; cf eg CWE 63 9 (Ps 1), 81–2 (Ps 2), while the *Paraphrase on Psalm 3* CWE 63 154–68 assumes that the persona represents the voice of the 'members.' See also Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* I 582–4. Alberto Pio was scandalized by Erasmus' paraphrastic representation of biblical personae; cf *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* CWE 84 79–80.

the words of my transgressions,'[172] he speaks with the voice not of the head but of the members – this on the authority of Augustine. Likewise, when he is sad, when he is distressed, when he prays that the cup may be taken away, when[173] again, as though correcting what he had said, he renounces his own will and submits to the will of the Father, he seems to have taken upon himself the feeling of the members.[174] Again, when he says to the retinue that was threatening him, 'If you seek me, let these go' [John 18:8], he plays the role of shepherd and bishop, the apostle of the flock.[175] For if ever the storm winds of persecution rush in, it is the duty of the pastor to throw his own life in front of the dangers for the safety of the flock. Moreover, when the disciples flee in terror, when Peter denies the Lord, when he strikes with the sword,[176] then Peter assumes the persona of the flock still weak and needing to be fostered towards a hope of better things. But again when Christ,[177] plaiting a whip, drives the crowd of money changers out of the temple, he plays the part of the chief pastor.[178] Sometimes he speaks expressing the feeling of others, as when he replies to the Canaanite woman who was importuning him quite shamelessly: 'It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to dogs.'[179] Here he speaks with the voice of the Jews, who regarded themselves

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172 Cf Matt 27:46. The first clause, cited by Matthew, refers to Ps 22:1a (VG 21:1a), the second clause, cited by Augustine, represents the Vulgate of Ps 21:1b according to the Septuagint (Ps 22:1b NRSV). Cf Augustine *Enarratio in psalmum 21*.3 (on Ps 22:1). Augustine recalls Ps 22:1 in his *Enarratio in psalmum 37*.6 (on Ps 38:3) when he attempts to establish a theological foundation for his hermeneutical concept of the personae of head and members.

173 when ... Father] Added in *1520*

174 Cf Matt 26:36–46; Mark 14:32–42; Luke 22:39–46. This biblical narrative provided the occasion for a vigorous debate between Erasmus and John Colet in 1499; cf Epp 108, 109, 110, 111. Later the debate was represented in a much enlarged form in *De taedio Iesu*, published in 1503 along with the *Enchiridion*; cf CWE 70 2–67, and especially 20–1, where Erasmus traces to Augustine (*Enarratio in psalmum 21*.4 [on Ps 22:3]) the view that in the garden Christ took upon himself the 'members' frailty.' Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 12, 14–15.

175 For 'apostle' as bishop and protecting shepherd see the representation of Peter in the paraphrase on Acts 2:14 CWE 50 17–18; also the interesting elaboration on the word in the paraphrase on Mark 3:14 CWE 49 50.

176 Cf Matt 26:56 and Mark 14:50 (disciples flee); Matt 26:69–75, Mark 14:66–72, and Luke 22:54–62 (Peter denies Christ); John 18:10 (Peter strikes with a sword).

177 But again when Christ] First in *1520*; previously, 'But when he'

178 The synoptic Gospels all narrate the event; cf Matt 21:12–13; Mark 11:15–17; Luke 19:45–6; John (2:15) notes that Jesus made a whip.

179 Cf Matt 15:21–8; Mark 7:24–30.

alone as holy and considered Canaanites, Samaritans, and the other profane races as impure and as dogs, though in Christ there was no distinction of race except in relation to the providential arrangement of time.[180] He knew that the attitude of this woman was to be preferred to the confidence of the Jews, but he wanted to impress upon the minds of his own race that those would share in the kingdom of heaven who had broken into it by faith, regardless of origin.[181]

Again, when he asks his disciples, 'Who do you say that I am?'[182] he plays the role of the head. Peter replies with the voice and in the place of the whole Christian people, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,' for there is no one in the body of Christ from whom this confession – 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God' – is not required. In like manner, the words spoken to Peter, 'You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven' [Matthew 16:18–19], extend, according[183] to the interpretation of certain people, to the entire body of Christian people.[184] It is different when he says to Peter, who

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180 'Providential arrangement of time': *temporis dispensatione* – an allusion to history divided from a theological perspective somewhat generally into three periods: before the Law, under the Law, under grace, a perception of time represented in the paraphrases on Rom 5:14 and on Gal 3:21–5 CWE 42 34–5 and 112–14. Soon, however, in a more specific and striking description of 'time periods,' Erasmus will divide the periods of time into five, in which a third intermediate period intervenes between those of Law and grace, sharing characteristics of each, while the fourth and fifth periods demarcate the Christian era.

181 This interpretation of the story of the Syrophoenician woman (Canaanite woman in the Matthean parallel) is elaborated in the paraphrase on Mark 7:24–30 CWE 49 93–4 (published 1524), which as here alludes clearly to Matt 11:12 (= Luke 16:16). The paraphrase on the corresponding passage in Matt 15:21–8 (published 1522) emphasizes the constancy and faith of the gentile in contrast to the disbelief and malice of the Jews, CWE 45 236–9 (published 1522).

182 Matt 16:15; Mark 8:29; Luke 9:20

183 according ... certain people] Added in *1522*

184 See the annotation on Matt 16:18 (*quia tu es*). It was in a *1519* addition to the annotation that Erasmus attempted to establish the view propounded here, citing Origen and, with qualification, Cyprian, while in a further addition in *1527* he cited Augustine. This passage in the *Ratio* specifically was criticized by Alberto Pio (cf CWE 84 299 with n1126). See also the criticism of López Zúñiga, reported in the *Apologia adversus Stunicae Blasphemiae*, and of the Spanish monks in *Apologia adversus monachos*, respectively ASD IX-8 140:457–8 and LB IX 1066F, 1067D–1068A. On the Petrine primacy see further *Ratio* 605 with n613, where Peter is called *senatus princeps*; and *Peregrinatio apostolorum* 955–6 with n21, where Peter is said to hold 'first place among the pre-eminent apostles.'

had thrice declared his love, 'Feed my sheep.'[185] Here Christ represents himself as the chief shepherd, that is, as the head, while Peter is a type of each and every bishop, to whom the flock for which Christ died is not entrusted unless the bishop loves Christ with an extraordinary love and looks only to the glory of Christ. His words were not, in truth, 'rule' or 'subdue the sheep,' but 'feed.' His words were not 'your sheep' but 'my sheep.' You are the shepherd of someone else's flock; you are not its master. See that in good faith you give to[186] the chief shepherd an account of the sheep entrusted to you. In the same way, Paul does not, in my opinion, speak in his own voice in the Epistle to the Romans, the seventh chapter, when, after a long lament about his own flesh rebelling against the Spirit, he at last cries out, 'Wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death?' [7:24]; he speaks rather with the voice of some other person, someone who was still weak, still no match for his own desires.[187]

Now, although the method of taking personae into account is especially important in the literature of the Old Testament, as in the prophets, the Psalms, the Song of Songs, nevertheless, it frequently has a place in the New Testament also, especially in the Pauline Epistles. Certain things, however, are put forward in such a way that they do indeed pertain to all, but not without distinction. For example, when Christ, speaking to the apostles, says, 'You are the salt of the earth; you are the light of the world' [Matthew 5:13–14], this pertains to all who profess the religion of Christ, but chiefly to bishops and magistrates. Likewise, when he says, 'Be perfect, as also your Father in heaven is perfect' [Matthew 5:48], he shows to all his people the end to which they must strive; yet those who are in charge of the church of Christ must especially manifest this.[188]

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185 Cf John 21:15–17.

186 to the chief shepherd] Added in *1522*. 'Give … an account': *enumeres* 'count out,' a reference apparently to John 10:3. For the shepherd as trusted servant, not master, see the paraphrase on John 21:16–17 CWE 46 224.

187 Erasmus had already expressed this view in his *1516* annotation on Rom 7:24 ('from the body of this death'), though there he did not accept the Vulgate reading that he adopts here.

188 The paraphrase on the Sermon on the Mount reflects the ambiguity of audience assumed here: in the paraphrase on Matt 5:13 the audience immediately in view is comprised of 'apostles, bishops, and teachers' CWE 45 93; in the paraphrase on 6:2 Jesus addresses 'whoever is a follower of the gospel law' CWE 45 113.

By taking into account the difference of times, like the difference of persons, one dispels the obscurity in arcane literature.[189] For not every command, prohibition, or permission given to the Jews should be accommodated to the life of Christians. Not that there is anything in the books of the Old Testament that does not pertain to us, but because many things that were handed down on a temporary basis as a type and dim outline of things to come are destructive unless they are allegorized – like circumcision, the sabbath, choice of foods, sacrifices, hatred of an enemy, wars undertaken[190] and waged in this spirit, a multitude of wives.[191] These are things that in part[192] are no longer permitted, in part have utterly vanished like shadows in the gleaming light of the gospel. However, with respect to the choice that one must consider – whether to adapt these rules and customs in a straightforward manner to our conduct, or to give them an allegorical interpretation – it is not my purpose to pursue the subject here, since Augustine has discussed this quite fully in the books *On Christian Doctrine*.[193]

Let the first time period, then, if you will, be that which preceded the life of Christ; the second, when the shadows of the former Law were fading as the light of the gospel was near at hand and now approaching, though it had not yet, in fact, arisen – as the sky gradually grows light when the sun, not yet risen, hastens to arise.[194] Then it was still enough to be baptized with the baptism of John, to be invited to repent of one's former life.[195] It was enough that the tax collectors be admonished to demand nothing beyond

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189 Cf Erasmus' defence of the principle articulated here in his response to the Paris faculty of theology, *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* CWE 82 37–41; cf also 'New Testament Scholarship' 340 with n1458.

190 undertaken ... this spirit] Added in *1520*

191 'Hatred of an enemy' appears to be an allusion to Matt 5:43, where a reference to the Old Testament may seem implied, though there are abundant examples of hatred in the Old Testament, eg 1 Kings 22:8 and Eccles 3:8. Augustine cites the example of polygamy in the Old Testament in his discussion of the figurative interpretation of Scripture; cf *De doctrina christiana* 3.18.26–21.31. Pio objected to Erasmus' interpretation of dietary regulations in the *Ratio* here and at two other points; cf *Ratio* 601–2 with n594, 599 with n581; cf CWE 84 181 with n447.

192 in part … in part] Added in *1520*

193 Cf Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 3.10.14–25.35. Erasmus refers to the choice between a tropological and an allegorical interpretation; cf *Methodus* n96.

194 For the images of Christ as the rising sun and of the gospel as the dawning of day see Mal 4:2; Rom 13:11–13; and the annotation on Rom 13:12 ('the night has preceded').

195 Cf Luke 7:29; Acts 19:3–4.

what had been set for them; it was enough that the soldiers be admonished to do violence to no one, to rob and pillage no one, but to be content with their wages.[196] Not that these things made them good men or truly[197] Christians, but that they caused them to be less evil and prepared them for the preaching of Christ that was soon to follow.[198] For John nowhere taught that one must not swear, must not divorce his wife, must take up his cross, must be kind to an enemy. These doctrines that made people Christians in the proper sense were being reserved for Christ.[199] Perhaps to this period of time belongs also the first preaching of the apostles, when, with the example of John before them, they are bidden to call to repentance, to announce that the kingdom of heaven is near, to say nothing about Christ.[200] Perhaps also the baptism with which they were at that time baptizing was of this sort, for the apostles were also then baptizing, as John bears witness, though Christ himself baptized no one[201] – nor is it related at all in canonical literature that anyone had been baptized by Christ.

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196 Cf Luke 3:12–14.

197 truly] Added in *1520*. On the expression 'truly Christian' cf the index in CWE 50 sv 'Christian.'

198 soon to follow.] In all editions except *Froben 1520* (February), where *mox successivae* is read, probably by mistake, as *successivus* is attested only once (and as a false reading) in the Latin literature of antiquity; cf L&S sv *successivus*.

199 Cf Matt 5:33–7 (swearing); Matt 5:31–2 (divorce); Matt 16:24, Mark 8:34, and Luke 9:23 (taking up the cross); Matt 5:43–8 and Luke 6:32–6 (kindness to enemies). For Erasmus' interest in and interpretation of the place of John the Baptist in the history of salvation see the paraphrase on Mark 1:4–8 CWE 49 14–17; also the paraphrase on Acts 19:1–5 CWE 50 115–16.

200 Cf Matt 10:5–15; Mark 6:7–13; Luke 9:1–6. In these narratives the disciples are not forbidden to speak of Christ, but neither are they told to preach Christ. Erasmus seems to interpret Jesus' instruction assuming an implied reference to the two levels of truth appropriate to the two levels of learning: rudimentary instruction for beginners and the 'mysteries' for the 'perfect,' a view articulated in the paraphrase on 1 Cor 2:7 (cf CWE 43 44–5 with n9) and in Ep 1333:393–413. Cf the paraphrase on Matt 10:7 CWE 45 167: the disciples are not to reveal to the 'unlearned' the 'deeper mysteries' that are to be reserved for 'more perfect teaching.'

201 Cf John 4:1–2. In the paraphrase on John 4:2 Erasmus in the persona of the Evangelist explains that Jesus did not baptize because he wished to show that preaching was more important than baptizing; cf CWE 46 53 with n2. Cf the paraphrase on 1 Cor 1:17, where the paraphrastic Paul regards 'efficacious discourse' as more important than baptism, CWE 43 35–6 with n36.

Let the third period, if you like, be the time when Christ was now becoming widely manifest to the world through miracles and teaching, and the evangelical doctrine was being proclaimed – without, however, forbidding the observance of the Law. This time period includes also the beginnings of the nascent and still unformed church after the Holy Spirit had been given.[202] Certain things, however, seem to belong specifically to this period: for example, all those parables about the cultivators of the vineyard who had killed the owner's son; about the wedding and the invitees who excused themselves;[203] likewise Christ's predictions about the sufferings and the afflictions[204] of preachers; and perhaps his admonitions to take up the cross, to shake off the dust from the feet, to greet no one on the way, to flee from city to city, to leave father and mother and wife; his precepts about the happiness of those who castrate themselves on account of the kingdom of heaven, about selling possessions and renouncing all affections, about frequently changing place;[205] finally, his words about the signs that would follow those who believed – otherwise we would not be Christians today, for it is clear that these

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202 For this 'time of accommodation,' when the Law was still practised by Jewish Christians, see the paraphrase on Acts 15:19–20 CWE 50 98 and the Argument to Romans, CWE 42 8.

203 Cf Matt 21:33–43, Mark 12:1–12, and Luke 20: 9–18 (vineyard); Matt 22:1–10 and Luke 14:15–24 (wedding).

204 and the afflictions] Added in *1520*

205 The sequence of allusions in this passage suggests that while Erasmus may be citing from memory, he is drawing upon two extended passages in Matthew, along with the synoptic parallels: (1) the mission of the apostles (Matt 10:5–23, 34–9) and (2) sayings that radicalize perspectives on family and possessions (Matt 19:16–30). For the synoptic parallels see Mark 6:7–13 and 13:9–13, Mark 10:17–31; Luke 10:1–12 and 21:12–19, and Luke 18:18–30. In these passages the admonition to greet no one in the way is found only in Luke (10:4); the admonition to take up the cross is found in Matthew in Jesus' address to the apostles that follows their commissioning (10:38), and in some texts (including Erasmus' own New Testament) in the narrative of the rich young ruler in Mark (10:21); it is also found elsewhere, eg Luke 14:25–7. In modern critical editions of the New Testament, only Luke (14:26–7; cf Matt 19:29; Mark 10:29) includes the 'wife' along with the father and mother who must be left behind, though some older texts (including Erasmus' New Testament) add the wife in both Matthew and Mark. 'Frequently changing place' may refer to Matt 10:23, but the injunction to the apostles that they should not change place when they enter a town (ie go from house to house, Luke 10:7) could be in mind; cf the paraphrase on Luke 10:7 CWE 47 267. On the 'happiness' of eunuchs (Matt 19:12) see *Ratio* nn155 and 933.

signs have not followed us.[206] And yet,[207] from the above this much applies to us, that we are commanded to possess what we hold dear in such a spirit that we are ready to give it up for the glory of Christ whenever the need arises.

To this same period of time belongs also the decision taken through Peter and James in the Acts of the Apostles that gentiles who had come to Christ should abstain from eating anything that had been strangled and[208] from blood, neither of which we regard as forbidden.[209] This concession was made to the unconquerable obstinacy of the Jews, who would not have been able to associate with the gentiles if these had had nothing at all of Judaism. Perhaps[210] we should view in the same manner the stumbling block before which the apostles with godly intent gave way at a time when the gospel was still of a tender age, when Judaism and paganism held sway. Today, would one not be a laughing stock who abstained from pork in the presence of Jews to avoid giving them offence? But the apostles continued to do so for some time.[211] Accordingly, those questions that Augustine raises in a certain letter seem to me, at least, to have no point. One of them is this: is a Christian per-

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206 Cf Mark 16:17–18; also John 14:12; and Erasmus' allusion to this verse in his paraphrase on Acts 5:15 CWE 50 41. Erasmus frequently expresses his conviction that signs and wonders were especially appropriate to the age of the apostles and were not intended for all times. Cf CWE 50 40 n19 and the *1535* addition to the annotation on 1 Cor 13:13 (*maior autem horum*): 'Certain gifts that were necessary at the beginning of the church are now at rest, for example, the gift of tongues, healings, foreknowledge of the future, and other miracles that are superfluous to those confirmed in the faith' ASD VI-8 264:904–7. Cf also the colloquy 'The Well-to-do Beggars' CWE 39 474:32–3. In the dedicatory letter to the Latin edition of Irenaeus' *Adversus haereses* (1526) Erasmus observes that traces of the apostolic age, observable in signs and wonders, could still be seen in the time of Irenaeus, Ep 1738:39–45.

207 And yet] First in *1520*; previously, 'granted that'

208 and] Added in *1520*

209 Cf Acts 15:20 and 29, 21:25; and n202 above.

210 Perhaps ... has fallen?] These several sentences were added in *1522*.

211 Apparently a reference to Gal 2:1–14 (Peter and Barnabas withdrew from eating with gentiles) and Acts 16:1–3 (Paul circumcised Timothy). See the paraphrases on these passages, in which both the godly intent and the temporal limitation are stressed, CWE 42 103–5, CWE 50 101. An addition in *1522* to the annotation on Acts 21:21 (*neque secundum consuetudinem ingredi*) in which Erasmus comments on the words 'there is nothing' in 21:24 (ASD VI-6 310:997–1000) stresses the 'godly intention' that motivated the apostolic concessions; similarly, a 1522 addition to the annotation on Gal 2:11 (*quia reprehensibilis erat*) ASD VI-9 92:567–70 – both additions evidently in response to Edward Lee's criticism of the annotation on Acts 21:21; cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 2* (Note 130) CWE 72 260.

mitted to drink water from a spring or a well into which meat sacrificed to idols has fallen?[212] Paul teaches that bishops should control their wives and children; today the right to have wives is forbidden even to subdeacons.[213] Paul wants a woman who is a believer to remain with her unbelieving husband, though Augustine and Ambrose[214] take a different view; and today the church judges otherwise.[215] Paul does not want a Christian slave to leave his pagan master unless he has been given his freedom; it is determined otherwise today.[216] There are many other things of this kind that were instituted for use in those times but have later been consigned to oblivion or changed, for example, many sacramental ceremonies. Many rites that we are now told to observe were then not observed, for example, feast days and perhaps the private confession of sins – would that[217] at the present time we might use it as profitably as we use it indiscriminately!

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212 Cf Augustine Ep 47.4.

213 Cf 1Tim 3:2–4; Titus 1:6–7. Erasmus reiterates precisely this point in the *Institutio christiani matrimonii* CWE 69 265, as he had done earlier in a *1519* addition to the annotation on 1 Tim 3:2 (*unius uxoris virum*) ASD VI-10 58:535–7 and in the annotation on 1 Cor 7:39 (*liberata est a lege, cui autem vult, nubat*), where he recalls the conflicting decisions of Popes Pelagius II (579–90) and Gregory I (590–604) on the celibacy of subdeacons; cf ASD VI-8 166:128–33; or Reeve-Screech 473. For the legal basis of this practice see CWE 69 265 with n180.

214 and Ambrose] Added in *1520*

215 For the Pauline text see 1 Cor 7:13–15. For the discussion of the text in Augustine see *De fide et operibus* 16.28 and *De coniugiis adulterinis* 1.1; for the discussion in Ambrosiaster see *Commentarius in epistulam ad Corinthios primam* (on 7:13–15). On the 'Pauline privilege' (ie the dissolution of marriage between a believer and a nonbeliever) see CWE 43 96 n34.

216 Cf 1 Cor 7:20–4. For the church's efforts to ransom slaves from the infidel see William D. Phillips Jr *Slavery from Roman Times to the Early Transatlantic Trade* (Minneapolis 1985) 108; see also in NCE 11 193 'Peter Nolasco' and 14 186–8 'Trinitarians.'

217 would that … indiscriminately!] First in *1522*; previously, 'which at the present time we profitably use.' Erasmus expressed his opinion quite freely on the subjects mentioned here. On feast days see the annotations on Matt 11:29 (*iugum meum suave*) ASD VI-5 208:389–209:398 and on Rom 14:5 ('for one judges'). Edward Lee attacked Erasmus' brief comment on confession in the *1516* annotation on Acts 19:18 (*confitentes et annuntiantes actus suos*); Lee's objection brought a lengthy response from Erasmus, *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 3* (Note 15) CWE 72 362–77. Confession is the subject of *Exomologesis* (*Manner of Confessing*) CWE 67 18–75, a subject that is pervasive in *Manifesta mendacia* CWE 71 116–31. On confession see *Ratio* n261. Responding to Alberto Pio, Erasmus

For the religion of Christ had by then been spread throughout the entire world and become established. The emperors were not persecuting it with their military arms, as they were accustomed to do, but were protecting it. They were not plundering but augmenting the resources of the church – for we have here, if you will, the fourth time period. New laws were introduced to match the transformation in the state of affairs. A few of these laws would seem to conflict with the tenets of Christ, unless we bring the Scriptures into harmony by observing the distinction of time periods.[218]

We can make a fifth time period now of the church falling away and degenerating from the pristine vigour of the Christian spirit.[219] To this period, I think, belongs the Lord's saying in the Gospel that as iniquity abounds, the love of many will grow cold; also, that there would be those who would say, 'Lo! here is the Christ; lo! there.'[220] Paul,[221] writing to Timothy, seems to have designated this time: 'In the last days shall come on dangerous times, men shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, haughty, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, wicked, without affection, without peace, slanderers, incontinent, unmerciful, without kindness, traitors, stubborn, puffed up, blind, and lovers of pleasures more than of God; having an appearance indeed of godliness, but denying the power thereof' [2 Timothy 3:1–5].[222]

But to prevent such a great variety of times, persons, and things from overwhelming the reader, it might be of some value to distribute the whole

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explained how one could speak of the 'rituals of sacraments,' *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* CWE 84 210. These three subjects are treated expansively by Craig Thompson in notes in the *Colloquies*; cf CWE 40 750 n256 (feasts), CWE 39 103 n53 (confession), and CWE 39 235 n220 (ceremonies).

218 Alberto Pio criticized this sentence; cf CWE 84 309 with n1183.

219 Erasmus saw 'spiritual vigour' as a characteristic of early Christianity; cf eg the dedicatory letter to Erasmus' edition of Irenaeus, Ep 1738:26–7, where Erasmus speaks of 'the ancient power of the gospel.' Cf also the dedicatory letter to the *Paraphrase on John*, Ep 1333:345–8, where Erasmus noted that 'in these last four hundred years the [gospel's] energy in most hearts had grown cold,' a statement criticized by Béda and later by the Paris theologians; cf ASD IX-5 440:250–441:280 (Béda) and CWE 82 227–8 (Paris theologians); cf also CWE 46 10 n23.

220 Cf Matt 24:12 (iniquity abounds) and 24:23; also Mark 13:21, which Erasmus appears to quote (Lo! here, lo there).

221 Paul ... power thereof'] Added in *1522*

222 Erasmus cites the *1527* Vulgate, which includes the adjective 'blind.' The word is omitted from the Clementine Vulgate, from Weber 1838, and from DV. He cites the passage below (616) without the word.

people of Christ into three circles, all of which, however,[223] have a single centre, Jesus Christ, towards whose absolutely unstained purity all must strive with all the power each person has. For we must never move the target[224] from its place; rather all the actions of mortals must be directed towards the goal.

Let those occupy the first circle,[225] then, who because they have, as it were, succeeded to the place of Christ are closest to Christ, always cleaving to and following the Lamb wherever he goes.[226] These are such persons as priests, abbots, bishops, cardinals, and popes. These must be as free as possible from the contamination of worldly things, such as the love of pleasures, the pursuit of money, ambition, the appetite for life. It is the responsibility of these to transfuse into the second circle the purity and light of Christ they have derived from nearby. The second circle contains the secular[227] leaders. Though secular, their arms and their laws in some way serve Christ, whether by overthrowing the enemy in necessary and just wars and keeping the public peace, or by curbing criminals with lawful punishments.[228] We may

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223 however] First in *Schoeffer 1519*; in *Froben 1519*, 'then'

224 'Target': *scopum*. Cf *Ratio* n147. On Christ as the goal see *Enchiridion* 'Fourth Rule' CWE 66 61–5.

225 Erasmus published in outline the image of the three circles in August 1518 in the letter to Paul Volz that served as a preface to a new edition of the *Enchiridion*; cf Ep 858:244–351. George Chantraine offers a detailed study of the image, which, he thinks, might have been suggested to Erasmus by John Colet; *'Mystère' et 'philosophie du Christ' selon Érasme: Étude de la lettre à Paul Volz et de la* 'Ratio' (Namur 1971) 120–6. Lefèvre d'Etaples, commenting on 1 Cor 12:12–13 in his 1512 edition of the Pauline Epistles, had drawn the image of the circle with Christ at its centre and the faithful believers coming out from the centre and back again into it; cf *S. Pauli epistolae XIV ex Vulgata, adiecta intelligentia ex graeco cum commentariis*, facsimile of the 1512 ed (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1978) 125r. The importance of the proper relation among prince, clergy, and people implied here in the image of the circle was reaffirmed much later when in 1532 the threat of religious war in Germany loomed; cf *Precatio pro pace ecclesiae* CWE 69 115.

226 Cf Rev 14:4.

227 'Secular': *profanos*; cf *Methodus* n49.

228 Erasmus discusses at length the role of the ruler in executing a just war and in curbing crime in *Institutio principis christiani* 6 ('Enacting or amending laws') and 11 ('On starting war') CWE 27 264–73, 282–8. For a short review of Erasmus' writings on the just war see the introduction to the colloquy 'Military Affairs' CWE 39 53–5. Cf also the *1527* addition to the annotation on Luke 22:36 (*sed nunc qui habet sacculum*), 'New Testament Scholarship' 305–6. Erasmus enunciates again the principles of the just war in *De bello Turcico* (1530) CWE 64 235–6.

allot the third circle to the undiscriminated crowd as the most stolid and untutored part of this orb we are constructing, remembering that though it is the most stolid and untutored part, it nevertheless belongs to the body of Christ.[229]

Within the individual circles we may picture to ourselves a sort of differentiating order. For when priests offer sacrifices to God, when they feed the people with the food of the evangelical word, when they converse with God in pure prayers, and when they intercede for the welfare of the flock,[230] or[231] when they meditate at home in private study to make the people better, they are no doubt dwelling in the purest part of their own circle. But when they comply with the inclinations of princes to prevent the latter from becoming provoked and arousing a worse commotion, when they unwillingly concede much to the frailty of the weak to prevent them from falling into things still worse, they are moving on the outside boundary of their circle, a boundary to which they proceed, however, only to draw others to themselves, not to become worse themselves.[232] Of the elements of which this lowest world consists, each has its own place; but fire, which holds a place next to the lunar orb, though in its highest part it is most pure and transparent and most precisely like the nature of the sky, is nevertheless somewhat heavier

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229 The inferiority of commoners is sharply contrasted with the character of the good prince in *Institutio principis christiani* CWE 27 212–14. 'Most stolid and untutored': *crassissimae*; for *crassus* in Erasmus' New Testament scholarship see CWE 48 32 n16.

230 The language of prayer in these clauses is characteristically Erasmian: on 'converse with God' (*cum Deo colloquuntur*) and 'intercede' (*interpellant*) see Hilmar Pabel *Conversing with God: Prayer in Erasmus' Writings* (Toronto 1997) 35–7, 39; on 'pure prayers' (*puris precibus*) see CWE 50 25 n121, 84 n9, and the paraphrase on Matt 6:1–8 (prefatory to the Lord's Prayer), where the 'pure and faultless sacrifice of prayer' stands in contrast to all that is counterfeit and self-seeking, CWE 45 114. On the purity required of the individual about to pray see *Modus orandi Deum* CWE 70 226.

231 or ... better] Added in *1522*

232 Erasmus acknowledges the necessity religious leaders may have to accommodate the weakness of the laity; cf the *1519* annotation on Matt 23:5 (*ut videantur ab hominibus*), where, commenting on the word 'phylacteries,' he deplores prevalent superstitious practices and adds: 'These practices are encouraged not … to accommodate the weakness of the common people … but because of the avarice of the priests and the hypocrisy of certain monks' ASD VI-5 300:715–18.

and coarser where it actually borders the lower atmosphere.[233] Likewise, the air is most like fire at the topmost edge of its circle, while in the lowest part, which borders water, it becomes thick. Perhaps the same can be said of water and earth. And meanwhile,[234] fire, which is the chief active force,[235] gradually carries off all things to itself and, as far as it can, transforms them into its own nature. The earth, attenuated by the winds, it changes into water, water vapourized it changes into air, rarified air it transforms into itself. The borders serve to transform into the better, not into the worse. So also Christ would frequently accommodate himself to the frailties of the disciples; so Paul used to indulge the Corinthians in many things, though he distinguished sometimes what he set forth in the name of the Lord for the perfect and what in his own name he pardoned in the weak, with the hope nevertheless that they would progress.[236]

Accordingly, when popes with their pardons and indulgences, as they call them, foster and encourage those who are slothful (or who are, perhaps, close to despair) until they progress to better things, they are not moving in the highest part of their circle.[237] When they also pass laws about extorting

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233 For the image and its application see Ep 858:324–31. Erasmus borrows from Stoic physics: the elements – fire, air, water, and earth – are a continuum, converting into one another to form increasingly dense substances as they descend from the highest to the lowest regions, and, in the reverse direction, converting again into increasingly light substances; cf Diogenes Laertius *Vitae philosophorum* 7.138–45, 155–6. 'Air' renders *aer*, in the Stoic scheme both 'air' and the region of the lower atmosphere.

234 And meanwhile] First in *1520*; in *Froben 1519*, 'And yet'; in *Schoeffer 1519*, 'And since,' which, if not a mistake, was perhaps read, 'And since fire ... transforms [all things] into its own nature, it changes the earth ... into water etc.'

235 which is the chief active force] Added in *1520*

236 Cf John 16:12 (Christ accommodates the frailty of his disciples); 1 Cor 3:2 and the paraphrase on 1 Cor 11:16 CWE 43 144 (Paul indulges the Corinthians); 1 Cor 7:8–16, 25–31, 39–40, and 1 Cor 2:6–3:3 (Paul distinguishes precepts).

237 In the course of his publications from fairly early to late, Erasmus criticized the contemporary practice of granting indulgences; cf eg *Moria* (1511) CWE 27 114; the letter to Paul Volz (14 August 1518), Ep 858:216; the dedicatory letter to the *Paraphrase on the Two Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians* (1519), Ep 916:325–30; a letter to Johann von Botzheim written soon after Erasmus had arrived in Freiburg (1529), Ep 2205:80–8; and *De praeparatione* (1534) CWE 70 447. By 5 March 1518 he was aware of Luther's attack on indulgences in the 'Ninety-five Theses,' which Erasmus called the 'Conclusions on Papal Pardons' (cf Ep 785:39 with 39n). Pio challenged Erasmus' representation in the *Moria*, the Paris theologians attacked his position in the dedicatory letter to the *Paraphrases* on the Corinthians, in

predial and personal tithes, about paying for the use of the pallium, about requiring the annates, as they name them,[238] about defending with arms the patrimony of Peter, as they call it, about subduing the Turks in war, and about innumerable other things – though we grant that they are concerned with something that is necessary or at least useful to our common life, still no one would say that they are engaged in what is peculiar to the heavenly philosophy.[239] And indeed perhaps popes,[240] even if they particularly wished, could not regulate their laws – the laws they publish for the common life of human beings – in such a way that these would correspond in every respect to the precepts of Christ. Christ, as that purest source of all light and innocence, teaches things that taste of heaven. Popes are men and prescribe according to circumstances what seems helpful for people who are weak, and weak in so many different ways. Accordingly, it is impossible that sometimes[241] among the prescriptions even of popes there should not be certain things that smack of human affections and in which you miss the innocence of Christ.

Moreover, just as the lowest part of fire is lighter than the highest part of air, so it is proper that what is grossest in the pontifical regulations

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each case eliciting an illuminating response from Erasmus; cf *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* CWE 84 175–8 and *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* CWE 82 88–9. See further *Ratio* 611 with n640, 707–8 with n1126, and the notes to CWE 84 175–8; see also CWE 39 42 n20 and CWE 40 660 n93.

238 as they name them] Added in *1522*

239 'Predial tithes,' ie tithes on the fruits of the earth; 'pallium,' ie a circular band worn by a metropolitan, imposed as a symbol of his jurisdiction, a costly privilege – when Erasmus' name was put forward for a cardinalate, late in his life, his income was insufficient for the honour without compensatory provisions; cf Allen Epp 3033 and 3048:83–96 (both August 1535); 'annates,' ie tax on the first year's income of an ecclesiastical benefice. For these see NCE 14 90–1 'tithes,' 10 807–8 'pallium,' 1 466 'annates.' For a similar list see the dedicatory letter to the *Paraphrases* on the Corinthians, Ep 916:189–92, and the same letter in CWE 43 9 with nn35, 36. For the 'patrimony of Peter,' ie the estates that belong to the church, see ODCC 1241 'Patrimony of St Peter'and 1548–9 'States of the Church.' See also the satirical description in *Julius Exclusus* CWE 27 177. On 'subduing the Turks' see CWE 39 610 n19, where C.R. Thompson observes that in 1517 the Fifth Lateran Council voted to call a crusade against the Turks; cf Ep 785:40n; but cf also the much later *De bello Turcico* (1530), with Michael J. Heath's introduction, CWE 64 202–9.

240 popes] *pontifices* first in *1522*; previously, *summi pontifices* 'supreme pontiffs'

241 sometimes] Added in *1522*

nevertheless comes closer to the straightforward candour of Christ than what is especially god-like in the laws of the Caesars or their magistrates. For since princes and magistrates are engaged in affairs that are connected with the lowest dregs and with the sordid business of the world, they must respond to their situation. Through their laws we do not happen at once[242] to be good, but for the time being[243] less evil. Accordingly, if these make regulations or decrees that depart somewhat from the precepts of Christ, take care ever and again not to mingle the most pure spring of Christian philosophy with the pools of these men, whatever sort such pools may be. Human laws ought to be sought from this archetype. The sparks of human laws are taken from the same light, but the gleam of eternal truth is reflected in one way in a smooth and polished mirror, in another way in an iron blade, in one way in a completely transparent spring, in another in a filthy pool.

I have said these things so that we might not taint the celestial philosophy of Christ with either the laws or the doctrines of human beings. Let that target remain intact; let that one unparalleled spring be unpolluted; let that truly sacred anchor of gospel teaching be preserved; in it one can take refuge amid such dark mists of human affairs. May[244] that cynosure[245] never become obscured for us, lest there be no sure constellation by which we might be put back once again on the right course when we have been enveloped in such great billows of error. May this pillar not be moved, in order that with its support we may withstand the force of this world, which always both sinks towards and carries one off to the worse. May that foundation remain solid and ready to give way before no blasts of opinion or storm winds of persecution – a secure foundation on which the good architect might place a structure of gold, silver, and precious stones – and when the hay and straw of the studied opinions of human beings have been consumed by fire, the

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242 at once] Added in *1520*

243 for the time being] Added in *1520*

244 May … Christ does not know how to err.] Added in *1520*. From this point, several major additions of *1520* break into the text of *1519* and are themselves later amplified by brief additions of *1522* and two major additions of *1523*. This series of *1520* additions extends from this point (537) to 'creeds grew' (552). Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 187.

245 'Cynosure': *cynosura*, ie the constellation of the Little Bear, by which, as Cicero reports, the Phoenicians steered their ships; cf *Academica* 2.20.66 and *De natura deorum* 2.41.106. The images here invite a recollection of the language of Heb 6:18–19 and Jude 13.

foundation itself might remain for a better edifice.[246] Men can make mistakes; Christ does not know how to err. Do not reject forthwith what human beings prescribe, but consider carefully who prescribes, to whom he prescribes, at what time, on what occasion, and,[247] finally, with what intent the prescription is given; but[248] above all whether a prescription agrees with gospel teaching, whether it has the taste of the life of Christ and reflects his life. 'The spiritual person discerns and judges all things,' says Paul, 'he himself is to be judged by no one.'[249] But if the teachings of Christ are twisted to accommodate human laws, what hope, I ask you, is then left? Much less indeed if the divine philosophy is bent to accommodate human desires, and, as the Greek proverb says, 'Let the Lesbian rule prevail.'[250]

We must,[251] I think, take the same point of view about the writings of the ancient and the modern Doctors[252] as about the laws established by human beings – the point of view just described. We ought not to be so devoted to any of these Doctors that we regard dissent at any point to be forbidden. Quite a few people today make a practice of doing this: here is one who has so devoted himself to the principles of Thomas or the doctrines of Scotus that he prefers to defend them even when they are false rather than swerve a single hair's breadth, as they say,[253] from the teachings of these Doctors,

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246 for a better edifice.] *structurae meliori* first in *1522*; in *1520*, *structura meliori*. For the image of the pillar see 1 Tim 3:15; for that of the architect and building, 1 Cor 3:10–15; but for the winds beating upon the foundation, Matt 7:24–7. The interpretation of 'hay' and 'straw' follows that in the annotation on 1 Cor 3:12 (*foenum, stipulam*) and the paraphrase on the same verse, CWE 43 56. Erasmus' annotation on the verse was challenged by Edward Lee, who, Erasmus argued, had misunderstood his annotation, *Responsio ad annotationes Lei* 2 (Note 160) CWE 72 278–80; his paraphrase was attacked by Noël Béda, ASD IX-5 547:896–548:915. A lengthy addition was made to the annotation in *1535*.

247 and ... intent] Added in *1522*

248 but ... reflects his life.] Added in *1520*

249 Cf 1 Cor 2:15.

250 Cf *Adagia* I v 93 and *Paraclesis* n63.

251 We must ... granted them] Added in *1520*. At this point Erasmus inserted into the *1519* text a very long addition in *1520*, interrupted by two additions in *1522* (cf nn254 and 268) and a long addition in *1523* (cf n271). The *1519* text resumes on 546; cf n286.

252 On 'the ancient and the modern Doctors' see n100 above.

253 Cf *Adagia* I v 6.

though the authors themselves do not want so much granted them – or,[254] to be more specific, though Augustine, a man so distinguished, wants his own books to be read in precisely the same way he himself was accustomed to read the books of others, however famous their authors were, that is (to use his own words), 'not with the necessity to believe but with the liberty to judge.'[255] And yet[256] to those ancient writers, especially those whom, besides their outstanding erudition, both their venerable antiquity and their very holiness of life commend, it is right to grant this, that we interpret their writings in a kindly manner, and that wherever their lapses are too obvious to be concealed, we respectfully dissent from them, not pursuing human mistakes with clamorous reproaches but attenuating and removing them as far as one can. We should feel the same way towards the teachings of the scholastics: let those teachings certainly have their weight on the exercise grounds[257] of the disputations; let them be admitted as the definitions of human beings, as themes and subjects for debates, not as articles of faith, especially since in these matters the schools themselves do not agree with one another, nor do the same schools always approve the same definitions. And, indeed, it becomes more unbearable that every day new dogmas are set down, and upon these, as though sacred and inviolate, we build Babylonian towers rising all the way to heaven.[258] We fight more fiercely to maintain these than we fight on behalf of the teachings of Christ.[259]

But certain tenets might seem to be of such a kind that the integrity of the Christian religion would remain nicely secure without them, some again

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254 or ... judge.'] Added in *1522*, interrupting the *1520* insertion

255 Cf Augustine *Contra Faustum Manichaeum* 11.5.

256 And yet ... for the people.] Added in *1520*. The long *1520* insertion (cf n251) continues here for four paragraphs, interrupted again by a *1522* addition; cf n268.

257 'Exercise grounds': *palaestris*; cf *Methodus* 452. Erasmus offers an interesting definition of *palaestra* in *Adagia* v ii 10.

258 Cf Gen 11:1–9.

259 In this paragraph Erasmus varies the language that designates 'teachings': *dogmata* 'teachings,' *decreta* 'doctrines,' and most frequently *placita*, translated here as 'principles,' 'definitions,' 'dogmas'; cf *Ratio* n152. Cf the dedicatory letter to the *Paraphrase* on Ephesians, *1520* version, for a similar attempt to advocate a harmonious coexistence between the 'ancients' and the 'moderns,' CWE 43 476–8, and for the *1521* version, 284–97.

of the sort that open a window for the destruction of true godliness.[260] To understand more clearly what I mean, take an example of the first kind. A godly man practises reverently the confession of sins as the practice originated among our ancestors and gradually arrived at its present form, for he respectfully maintains the view that one ought not dissent on his own authority from what the public practice of Christians and the authority of leading men have approved. Not content with this obedience, certain people add their own tenet that this confession, since it is a part of the sacrament, had been instituted not by the apostles but by Christ himself. For, say they, the church does not have the right either to add any sacrament to the seven or to remove any from them – though they themselves attribute to one man the right or the full power to do away with purgatory if he wishes. To me, at least, this tenet does not seem entirely essential to piety. For of what importance is it to godliness whether a thing has been instituted by Christ himself or by the church inspired by the Spirit of Christ? Unless, perhaps, we fear we will lose the profit we gain from anything of this sort, using the holiest things for an unholy end! And yet I should not want these comments to be taken in any other way than as an example adduced for the purpose of illustration.[261]

Another example of the same kind seems to be the following. A good man believes that Christ was conceived from the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin. What need was there for so many definitions? Presently,[262] the living

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260 Alberto Pio criticized this sentence, quoting it in a garbled version that Erasmus characterized as 'slanderous and shameful'; cf CWE 84 308–9 with n1180.

261 On private confession cf *Ratio* n217. Critics found Erasmus' doubt whether confession was instituted by Christ particularly objectionable; so Lee (cf n217); also the Spanish monks, *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1062C–1064B. In *De libero arbitrio* CWE 76 11–12 Erasmus expressed the view that even if 'confession as we now practise it had not been instituted by Christ and could not have been instituted by men,' it would remain a valuable means to godliness. In *Manifesta mendacia* CWE 71 122–3 Erasmus claims that he 'never denied that some type of confession was instituted by Christ'; he also (ibidem) defends his claim that some people (including Scotus) attribute to the pope the authority to do away with purgatory. But see especially *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* CWE 84 66–7 with nn327–34, where Erasmus, responding to Pio's charge that he left the reader to form his own opinion, offered a careful defence of the position on confession he had taken in the *Exomologesis*.

262 'Presently': The thought is elliptical: as the number of definitions grew, the time soon came when they reached the absurdity mentioned here. The tone is satirical.

body of a human being complete with all its limbs was fashioned from an absolutely pure little drop of the Virgin's blood the size of a tiny wee spider; into this was placed at the same time a soul complete with all the gifts it now enjoys in heaven. To me, at least, it would seem to contribute to godliness if we either did not explore these things or at least explored them more reverently; but at the present time we affirm them in front of the unlearned populace as most definitively ascertained.[263] Meanwhile, this too I would put forward only by way of illustration, for I prudently abstain both from multitudinous and from serious examples.

Here is an example of the second kind: sometimes we attribute to princes more than we should, whether seeking something from them or following a custom we see commonly observed. For there are those who contract the whole body of the church into one man, the Roman pontiff, who alone,[264] they say, cannot err whenever he makes a pronouncement on faith or morals. The whole world, they say, though it stands united in a different opinion, ought to trust the judgment of a single individual, the one pontiff; if it does not do so, it must be judged schismatic.[265] And yet the very ones who attribute to the Roman pontiff more than even he himself acknowledges attribute very little to him if anything stands in the way of either their greed or their ambition – then the inviolable scruples of religion are banished, then the enlightened theologian inclines towards a universal council, then a summons to a synod is proposed.[266] Does not teaching of this kind open a vast

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263 The affirmations reported here are similar to those in *Moria* CWE 27 126–7; cf 126 n405. For the medieval discussion of such definitions see Thomas Aquinas *Commentum in quattuor libros sententiarum* III dist 3, quaest 5, art 1 and 2. With the absurd definition here of the conception of Jesus compare Erasmus' restrained but explicit account in the paraphrase on Luke 1:34–5 CWE 47 44–5.

264 alone] Added in *1522*

265 Cf *Manifesta mendacia* CWE 71 124 with n61, Ep 1410:23–39, and *Ratio* 707.

266 For a similar comment on the ambiguous attitude of the monastic orders to papal authority see Ep 447:603–9 (August 1516). General Councils were convoked by the pope; provisional regional councils were meetings of bishops at which papal legates sometimes presided; synods were assemblies of diocesan priests under the presidency of the bishop (cf Berlioz *Sources* 177) – but Erasmus may be using the terms here without precision. The Fifth Lateran Council had concluded in 1517, but the question of the respective authority of council and pope was particularly urgent in the Councils of Constance (1414–18) and Basel (1416–1439/1445); cf CWE 40 732–3 nn96 and 97.

window to tyranny if such great power should come to an ungodly and destructive man? In addition, there are certain teachings of the scholastics – or rather of the monks – concerning vows, tithes, restitutions, absolutions, confessions, by which the souls of the simple, or at least of the superstitious, are grievously ensnared, bringing great harm to the people but exceptional advantage to those for whom, as for bad physicians, times are best when they are worst for the people.[267]

We[268] do not envy the majesty of the Roman pontiff. Would that he truly had what those attribute to him, and that in matters that pertain to godliness he would not be able to slip! Would that he might truly be able to deliver souls from the pains of purgatory! Nor do I deny that popular morality is prone to unrestrained licentiousness at every point and sometimes must be restrained by barriers like those mentioned – if only evangelical integrity permits you to coerce some, to ensnare the consciences of others, even if [269] we admit that Platonic lie that the wise man deceives the people for the good of the one who is deceived.[270]

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267 The practice of making vows, like that of making confession, was a frequent target of Erasmus' criticism, as was the role of monks in taking advantage of these practices. See eg the colloquies 'Rash Vows,' 'The Whole Duty of Youth,' 'The Shipwreck,' 'The Funeral' CWE 39 35–9, 90–9, 352–60 and CWE 40 764–9, with the notes to the relevant lines; see also *Moria* CWE 27 132 and *In psalmum 4* CWE 63 273. On tithes see n239 above. In another *1520* addition Erasmus will soon again speak of indulgences and other practices he deplores for the financial gain they bring; cf *Ratio* 611 with n640, where the term *remissio* 'absolution' is evidently used for 'indulgence' (on which see *Ratio* n237). A similar list appears in the letter to Paul Volz (1518), where the gain derived from these practices is sharply criticized; cf Ep 858:56–7 and 196–224. For scholastic discussions on such matters see Thomas Aquinas *Summa theologiae* pars 2, div 2, quaest 62 (restitution), 87 (tithes), and 88 (vows).

268 We ... deceived.] Added in *1522*

269 even if] *1523*; in *1522*, 'and'

270 Cf Plato *Republic* 3.389B–D, 5.459C–E. Socrates argues that the rulers of his imagined commonwealth may use deception to breed children possessing the excellence required by the state. For the 'noble lie' see *Republic* 3.414B–415D.

Now,[271] assuredly, an unbreachable wall[272] arising from the jurisconsults, if I am not mistaken, has been taken over by the theologians, namely, the view that an indissoluble marriage arises from consent alone.[273] To how many snares, how many anxieties, how many almost inexplicable difficulties does this tenet give rise? Nor do I see on what rational arguments or on what Scriptures it rests. But what harm would befall the Christian commonwealth if marriages were validated just as they were among the Jews, Greeks, and Romans.[274] While, however, mutual consent would still be the principal part

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271 Now ... can have three wives.] This lengthy insertion appeared in *1523*. For the resumption of the *1520* text see n284. The insertion discusses problems arising from contemporary regulations affecting marriage and is illuminated by Erasmus' annotation on 1 Cor 7:39 (*liberata est a lege, cui autem vult, nubat*). In the course of his long argument in that annotation Erasmus spoke passionately in the text of *1519* about the problems caused in marriages by the contemporary interpretation of the rule that 'consent alone' – and the consent only of the couple – bound the two in marriage; he pointed to the unfortunate circumstances in which such consent could be given, and urged that the authoritative consent of parents be required (ASD VI-8 172:253–173:269 and 186:528–43; Reeve-Screech 475, 479). In a *1522* addition to that annotation he added further that this was the exemplary custom of the Hebrews, Greeks, Romans, and barbarians (ASD VI-8 186:527–8; Reeve-Screech 479). Two large additions, also in *1522*, attempted a historical review of theological opinion in antiquity and the Middle Ages, coming to focus on the question of papal authority in dissolving marriages and pointing to those regulations that permitted a legitimate marriage to be dissolved before consummation, for example, as it concerned a spouse desiring to enter the monastic life (ASD VI-8 150:834–151:878 and 154:933–158:9; Reeve-Screech 468–71). Cf the summary of the *1519* annotation and the *1522* additions in 'New Testament Scholarship' 147–9 and 208 with n807. The problems outlined in this *1523* insertion in the *Ratio* are more clearly articulated in Erasmus' major work, *Institutio christiani matrimonii* (1526) CWE 69. Hence in the notes that follow I refer the reader to this work for clarification of themes set out here.

272 'Unbreachable wall': *murus aeneus*, an expression explained in *Adagia* II X 25 as 'a precise and immutable decision,' citing Horace *Epistles* 1.1.60; cf also Horace *Odes* 3.3.65.

273 For a historical account of the place of consent in Christian marriage see CWE 39 271 n48. See also the discussion on consent in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* CWE 69 241–54, 291–6, and the notes on 241–54 identifying the respective roles played by canon law and the theologians in clarifying the principle of consent. For further consideration of canon law in the institution of marriage see CWE 69 256–76.

274 Cf *Institutio christiani matrimonii* CWE 69 245–8, where Erasmus cites evidence from Roman, Jewish, and Greek sources to show that marriages in these societies were subject to the authority of parents.

of marriage, it would not be 'stem and stern,' as they say.[275] I think that this too derives from the jurisconsults when it is said that if the cowl is assumed, a marriage that is indeed valid but not yet consummated is dissolved.[276] 'This is done,' they say, 'in the interest of religion.' Is it religious to injure a bride? Is it not permitted to live a religious life within matrimony?[277]

Now the view that a marriage procured through fraud or deceit ought not to be dissolved unless a mistaken claim concerns the person or the person's status is one that does indeed have a certain human justification sufficiently probable. For I do not think it right for a marriage to be dissolved if a spouse who had been said to possess ten acres is found to have only nine, or one who was said to be thirty years of age was thirty-six. But will it also seem right to compel a girl who is well born, virtuously reared, of holy character, of unspotted reputation to spend her life forever with a man who was deceitfully declared to come from a respectable family, though he is the son of some pimp – or worse? To spend her life with a man who was said to be rich when he has mortgaged even his life? with a man who was said to be upright and of blameless reputation when he is sunk deep in every kind of criminal act? with a man who was put forward as having a healthy body when he has leprosy or what is now called the French disease, which is just like leprosy?[278] And yet we will more quickly give our approval to this than allow a scholastic tenet to lapse.

No more pleasant are the consequences to which we are led ultimately by the precept that we must not commit any wrong, however trivial, to obtain a good result, however great. But if the pope, for reasons that in my

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275 Cf *Adagia* I i 8, where Erasmus explains the proverb as signifying 'the sum of the whole business, everything that is important and essential for it.'

276 For a further discussion of the effect that taking monastic vows had upon marriage see *Institutio christiani matrimonii* CWE 69 284–8. For the canonical formulation of the principle see Norman P. Tanner *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols (Washington DC 1990) II 754, canon 6.

277 Erasmus frequently affirmed that the truly religious life belongs as well outside the monastery as within it; cf eg Ep 858:581–632 (with regard to marriage, 600–2), *Enchiridion* CWE 66 57–8, and *Methodus* 445–6 with n103: we apply 'to monks what is said about Christians.'

278 Erasmus discusses the problem of deceit in marriage in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* CWE 69 257–8 and 291–2. For Erasmus' horror at the 'French disease' (syphilis) see ibidem 326–8 and the colloquy 'A Marriage in Name Only' CWE 40 842–59. For scholastic teaching see eg Thomas Aquinas *Commentum in quattuor libros sententiarum* IV dist 30, quaest 1, art 1 and 2.

opinion are not very important, dissolves a marriage between persons whom he, on his own authority, beyond the authority of Divine Scripture, has pronounced 'incompatible' (to use their expression),[279] why does he not much rather render incompatible those who were deceived by a flagrant trick and have been caught in an unhappy marriage that is worse even than death to a girl of respectable station? Now this, too, was regarded as an article of faith many centuries back, that a solemn vow (as they call it) can by no means be broken, while one that is not solemn can.[280] For it is irrelevant to this argument that the pope does not entrust a release of this sort to bishops or to parish priests, though he commonly entrusts a purchasable right to agents and to people of the most sordid and ignorant kind.[281]

Now, from the concept of spiritual kinship how many snares arise for us. Although the concept was introduced through a purely human law, nevertheless, theologians give an account of it as though it could not be otherwise.[282] But the case was otherwise before the regulation arose, and perhaps it would be advantageous to repeal regulations of this sort. Away with those arguments from the similar, the like, the unlike in cases involving a special concession; away with them where there is no conflict with a right that God has been pleased to grant. 'If kinship of the flesh is an impediment, much more kinship of the spirit' – why do we not rather argue thus: if kinship of the flesh makes me an heir, why not rather kinship of the spirit? 'No one can have two wives at the same time; therefore no one is able to have two parishes at the same time.' Why not argue thus: a bishop is able to resign or exchange his sacerdotal office, therefore a husband can do the same? The

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279 'Incompatible': *inhabiles*; cf *Institutio christiani matrimonii* CWE 69 281.

280 The distinction between the simple and the solemn vow is discussed in *Institutio christiani matrimonii* CWE 69 258–63, 284–7; cf Thomas Aquinas *Commentum in quattuor libros sententiarum* IV dist 38, quaest 1, art 1 and 2. For the scholastic discussion regarding the effect of the simple and solemn vows on the dissolution of a marriage see ibidem IV dist 38, quaest 1, art 3, quaestiunculae 2 and 3.

281 Perhaps a reference to the sale of indulgences

282 For the concept of spiritual kinship see *Institutio christiani matrimonii* CWE 69 269–70. For the scholastic discussion of spiritual kinship see Thomas Aquinas *Commentum in quattuor libros sententiarum* IV dist 42, quaest 1. For 'regulation' (Latin *constitutio*) in the sentence that follows see CWE 40 739 n99: '"Constitutions" are ordinances or regulations of popes, bishops, and sometimes heads of religious orders.'

pope grants that the same man can have three bishoprics; one can therefore concede that the same husband can have three wives.[283]

Every[284] day we hear complaints about these things from godly men who earnestly desire the good of the Christian flock. It is not for me or for people like me to tear down what has been accepted through common use. Still, it is right to desire that that Divine Spirit should blow upon the minds of popes and princes in order that they might wish[285] to examine those things in such a way that more true godliness and less superstition attend to the people, and that less tyranny also is allowed to those whose good fortune is fed by the evils the public endures. And yet it is my desire to advance these things, too, only by way of example, for my intent at present is to teach, not to provoke.

In addition,[286] we will enjoy an important advantage if we diligently read through the books of both Testaments and consider closely that wonderful circle and harmony of the entire drama of Christ (if I may use the expression), a drama acted out[287] for our sake by the one who was made

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283 Various councils legislated against plurality of office and defined the terms on which dispensations from the general rule could be granted. For the legislation see Norman P. Tanner *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, 2 vols (Washington DC 1990) II 1312, index SV 'pluralism of benefices and offices.'

284 Every ... provoke.] Added in *1520*

285 in order that they might wish] *ut vellent* added in *1522*. In *1520* the sentence was constructed: 'It is right to desire that ... princes, [it is right] to examine ...'

286 In addition] The *1519* text resumes at this point; cf nn271 and 251 above. What follows is a vast expansion of the passage in the *Methodus* that noted the 'whole course and circle of Christ's life,' though here in the *Ratio* the theme is developed in a substantially different way; cf *Methodus* 442–4, where the images of 'course and circle' (*circulum et orbem*) were briefly developed as an account of Christ's life; here 'circle and harmony' (*orbem et consensum*) are elaborated somewhat ambiguously as both an account of the life of Jesus and a demonstration of the concinnities of his life and teaching with Old Testament teaching and with one another. In Erasmus' view, these correspondences offered rational grounds for the believer's confidence in the claims of the Christian faith. Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 243–6 with n996.

287 The language is that of the theatre – to act out a play: *fabulam peragere*; cf Cicero *De senectute* 19.70. Erasmus clearly liked the word *fabula* in describing the saving-events of Christian belief. The metaphor applied in this way was challenged by such critics as Noël Béda and Alberto Pio; cf the paraphrase on 1 Cor 14:16 CWE 43 167 with n20 (Béda) and *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* CWE 84 57–8 with n271 (Pio). Martin Luther also objected; cf *Purgatio adversus epistolam Lutheri* CWE 78 424–5 with n65, 455 with n257; also 'New Testament Scholarship' 342 with n1472.

man. If we do so, we shall not only understand more correctly what we read, but we shall also read with a more certain confidence. For no lie is so skilfully fabricated that it is at all points consistent. Collect from the books of the Old Testament[288] the types, and the oracles of the prophets: the types sketch out and represent in outline the Christ; the oracles point to his coming as though with the eyes of faith. Those[289] divine seers portrayed almost everything Christ did. There is nothing in his teaching that does not find a correspondence in some passage in the Old Testament, as Tertullian so nicely shows in the fourth book *Against Marcion.*[290] Following the prophets comes the witness of the angels – of Gabriel announcing to the virgin a celestial marriage, of the angelic choir singing together at the nativity, 'Glory to God in the highest.' The witness of the shepherds soon is added, then of the Magi, of Simeon and Anna besides.[291] Then comes the prelude in the preaching of John the Baptist, who now points out the presence of the one who the prophets predicted would come;[292] and so that we might know what to expect from

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288 Testament] *instrumenti* 'Instrument' first in *1520*; in *1519*, *testamenti* 'Testament'; cf 'Title Page of the *Novum instrumentum* 1516' 743 with n1. For Pio's objection to 'Instrument' see *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* CWE 84 56 and n268. For the liar's proverbial inconsistency as expressed in the previous sentence see *Adagia* II iii 74.

289 Those ... *Marcion.*] Added in *1522*

290 Cf Tertullian *Adversus Marcionem* 4.6–43; this large treatise was one of those included in the *editio princeps* of Tertullian's writings; cf *Ratio* n121. Cf also *De philosophia evangelica* 730–5 with n26, where Erasmus apparently drew on *Adversus Marcionem* 4 to facilitate a comparison between Old and New Testament passages. In 1523, composing the *Paraphrase on Luke*, Erasmus would again draw heavily on the *Adversus Marcionem* for the long paraphrase on Luke 24:27 to demonstrate the Old Testament fulfilled in the New; cf CWE 48 235–70 with the references passim in the notes.

291 The allusions, except that to the Magi (Matt 2:1–15), follow Luke's narrative (1:26–38, 2:1–38). However, 'in the highest' renders *in excelsis* as in Luke 19:38 (VG), not *in altissimis*, as in Luke 2:14 (both VG and ER). In the iconography of the period *in excelsis* is commonly found in the representation of the angelic proclamation to the shepherds, reflecting the words in the Gloria of the mass. For the 'celestial marriage' see the paraphrases on Matt 1:20 CWE 45 43–4 and on Luke 1:34–5 CWE 47 43–6.

292 Cf John 1:24–36. For John's ministry as a prelude see the paraphrase on John 1:28–9, 36 CWE 46 30, 33. 'Points out' renders *digito indicantis*, literally, points with a finger; cf the paraphrase on Mark 1:14 CWE 49 14; and for the expression in medieval biblical interpretation see CWE 49 14 n9; cf also *Adagia* I X 43. In the iconography of the period John is frequently portrayed pointing with his finger to Christ.

the one to come, he adds, 'Behold the one that takes away the sins of the world.'[293] This one alone is the Lamb that knows no blemish; he is not only a lamb, but he also makes lambs. He does not promise his own a kingdom, pleasures, honours,[294] or wealth, but he promises innocence if only people come to their senses and repent. Moreover, no true good will be absent if innocence is present.

After this, observe the entire sequence of his life, how he grew, making constant progress in the sight of both God and men.[295] Before God there is the commendation of a good conscience; among human beings there is the grace of an honourable reputation, which more happily attends true excellence when it has not been sought. He first gave proof of what he was when at the age of twelve he taught and, in turn, listened in the temple. Again, he became known to a few at a wedding, when he performed privately his first miracle – for he undertook the duty of preaching only when he had been baptized and commended by the sign of the dove and the voice of the Father, and, finally, only when he had been tested and tried by a forty-day fast and the temptation of Satan.[296] Examine his nativity, his upbringing, his preaching, his death; you will find nothing but a model of poverty and humility, or rather, a model of all innocence. Just as his teaching in its entire orbit is self-consistent, so it is consistent with his life,[297] consistent even with

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293 Cf John 1:29. 'Sins' reflects the Vulgate rather than Erasmus' own translation 'sin': in his annotation on the verse (*peccata mundi*) he notes that the singular denotes sin as a universal; cf the paraphrase, CWE 46 30 with n115. In the same annotation Erasmus interprets 'lamb' as a symbol of innocence and purity, hence the stress on innocence in what immediately follows. On innocence see CWE 44 xvii; and Gerhard B. Winkler *Erasmus von Rotterdam und die Einleitungsschriften zum Neuen Testament: Formale Strukturen und theologischer Sinn* (Münster, Westfalen 1974) 165, where Winkler observes, with reference to the innocence described several lines below in this passage, that 'poverty and humility are virtually synonymous with *innocentia*, signifying the helplessness of the defenseless lamb.'

294 pleasures, honours] Added in *1520*

295 Cf Luke 2:52. In his annotation on the verse (*et Iesus proficiebat etc*) Erasmus suggests that Jesus' 'progress' reflected the gradual impartation of the divine gifts to his human nature.

296 Cf Luke 2:41–7 (teaching in the temple); John 2:1–11 (wedding at Cana); Matt 3:13–4:11, Mark 1:9–13, Luke 3:21–2 and 4:1–13 (baptism and temptation). Erasmus appears here to place the wedding chronologically before the baptism and temptation, as he will do later, cf *Ratio* 628 with n718.

297 For Luther's objection to this statement see *Purgatio adversus epistolam Lutheri* CWE 78 451 with n237 and 'New Testament Scholarship' 342 with n1470.

the judgment of nature itself. He enjoined innocence; he himself so lived that not even suborned witnesses found any convincing point of slander, though they sought it in various ways. He taught gentleness; he himself was led as a sheep to the slaughter. He taught poverty; we read that he himself never[298] either possessed or sought anything. He gave no place to ambition and pride; he himself washed his disciples' feet; he taught that this was the way to true glory and immortality.[299] He himself through the ignominy of the cross won the name that is above every name, and though he did not strive for any kingdom on the earth, he obtained dominion over heaven and earth alike.[300] After his resurrection, he taught exactly what he had taught before. He had taught that the godly must not fear death, which[301] does not snuff out our life but gives us immortality, and for this reason he showed himself to his disciples, alive again. As they were looking on, he ascended into heaven that we might know to what point we must exert our efforts and refer all things. Last in order, that heavenly Spirit descended; by its breath it made the disciples the men Christ wanted them to be.[302]

And[303] in all these things he was himself in a certain manner his own seer. For just as Christ did nothing that was not sketched out in outline through the types of the Law or was not predicted through the oracles of the prophets, so he did nothing worthy of memory that he had not earlier predicted to his disciples – about his death (the kind of death, the place of death, the effect of his death), about his burial, resurrection,[304] return to heaven, the power of the Holy Spirit, the distress of the disciples,[305] the defection of the

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298 never ... anything.] First in *1520*; previously, 'never possessed anything'

299 Cf Matt 26:59–63, Mark 14:55–61 (witnesses suborned); Isa 53:7, Acts 8:32 (sheep to the slaughter); Matt 8:20 (possessed nothing); John 13:1–15 (foot washing).

300 Cf Phil 2:8–11.

301 which ... immortality] Added in *1520*

302 Cf Matt 10:26–33 (fear death); Acts 1:9–10 (Ascension); Acts 2:1–4 (Spirit descended); for the transformation of the disciples see the paraphrases on Acts 2:1–14, 42–7 CWE 50 13–17, 25–6.

303 And ... point.] Added in *1523*

304 Cf eg Matt 20:17–19; and for 'the effect of his death' John 12:32–3. That the events listed here are said to be *memorabile* 'worthy of memory' alludes perhaps to such passages as Luke 24:8 and John 2:22 and 12:16, where the disciples are said to have remembered events predicted by Jesus.

305 'Distress': *perturbatione*; the allusion is not clear. The language suggests the supposed distress of the disciples at Jesus' departure; cf John 14:1–17, 16:19–21.

Jews and the reception of the gentiles,[306] about spreading the gospel from its very small beginnings throughout the whole world, which took place wonderfully through the lowly and the uneducated, about the suffering of the disciples, the destruction of the city of Jerusalem, about the heresies that would shake the concord of the church.[307] You see what great agreement there is at every point.

You will perhaps find in the books of Plato or Seneca principles that are not inconsistent with the tenets of Christ. You will find in the life of Socrates things that in some way accord with the life of Christ.[308] But in Christ alone will you find this circle and harmony of all things congruent with each other. In the prophets there are both many inspired sayings and many godly deeds; there are many in Moses and in other men distinguished for the sanctity of their lives. In the case of no one else will you find such a completion of the cycle, a cycle that begins with the prophets and comes full circle with the life and teaching of the apostles and martyrs.[309] These expressed whatever Christ taught, fulfilled whatever he promised; they had drunk the same Spirit,[310] they speak and teach the same things as Christ. Everything to this point is to be revered; the rest is to be read or even to be imitated with judgment and discrimination.

It[311] would perhaps not be unreasonable to establish some order of authority among sacred writings also, as Augustine did not scruple to do.[312] First

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306 Cf some of the parables of Jesus, eg the parable of the keepers of the vineyard, Matt 21:33–43; Mark 12:1–9; Luke 20:9–18; and for the fulfilment of the prediction see Acts 13:45–8.

307 The 'little apocalypses' of Matthew 24, Mark 13, and Luke 21 may provide the basis for the predictions listed here: the gospel preached to the entire world, the suffering of the disciples, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the emergence of heresies. See also the narrative of Acts for the spread of the gospel and the sufferings of the disciples; the destruction of Jerusalem and the growth of heresies were common knowledge abundantly referenced in early Christian literature.

308 For the general principle implied here see the colloquy 'The Godly Feast' CWE 39 192–4 with nn187 and 215. See Translator's Note to *Paraclesis* 403 with n36; also *De philosophia evangelica* 730–3, which Luther attacked at this point; cf *Purgatio adversus epistolam Lutheri* CWE 78 448–50 and 'New Testament Scholarship' 342. For the 'Christian principles' of Seneca see eg *Epistulae morales* 341.

309 and martyrs.] Added in *1520*

310 Cf 1 Cor 12:13.

311 It ... grew.] Except for the last sentence, this paragraph was added in *1520*.

312 Cf Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 2.8.13, where, however, Augustine merely reflects a traditional order of the biblical books: historical books, wisdom literature, prophets, and New Testament. 'Also' appears to allude to a similar

place is owed to those books about which the ancients never had any doubt. For me, at least, Isaiah has more weight than Judith or Esther, the Gospel of Matthew more than the Apocalypse attributed to John, the Epistles of Paul to the Romans and the Corinthians more than the Epistle to the Hebrews.[313] The next place after these is held by certain things that have been passed down to us by hand, as it were, and have reached even to us either from the apostles themselves or at least from those who lived close to the times of the apostles. Among these I place first of all the creed commonly known as the 'Apostles',' produced, if I mistake not,[314] at the Council of Nicaea.[315] I believe it derives

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preferential order for secular authors implied in the allusion just above to Plato and Seneca; for the prioritization of secular literature see *De ratione studii* CWE 24 666–76. As the allusion just below to the Apostle's Creed indicates, 'sacred writings' extend beyond the biblical books.

313 For the 'ancient witness' to the canon of Scripture see Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 3.25 (Eusebius on the canon of the New Testament, books included and excluded), 6.25 (Origen on the books of the Old Testament and New Testament, including in the latter the disputed books), and 7.25 (Dionysius of Alexandria [d 264/265] on Revelation). On Judith see Jerome's prologue to the book, Weber 691; on Esther see Ferguson *Early Christianity* I 387; and on the development of the canon, ibidem 205–11. For Erasmus on the canon see *Explanatio symboli* CWE 70 332–6 with nn231, 235, and 237, also CWE 44 212 n3 (on Hebrews), and the annotation on Rom 15:24 ('that in passing by') CWE 56 413 with n15 (on Revelation). Critics often challenged Erasmus on the doubts he expressed about some books of the New Testament; the critics included the Spanish monks, to whom he affirmed impatiently that he had already defended his views 'dozens of times,' but nevertheless he spoke again to the issue in *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1079D–1080A. In Froben's 'Separate Latin Edition' (July 1522) Erasmus had translated a fragment purporting to be from Athanasius listing books whose canonicity was disputed; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 184. On Erasmus' preference for Isaiah see *Methodus* 448 with n110, repeated in *Ratio* 694.

314 if I mistake not] Added in *1522*

315 In his late (1533) *Explanatio symboli* CWE 70 252–3 Erasmus distinguishes clearly the Apostles' Creed from the Nicene Creed and says that the former was probably 'the first of all,' CWE 70 253. However, as Craig Thompson notes in the colloquy 'An Examination Concerning the Faith,' Erasmus 'is disposed to date [the Apostles' Creed] from the first Council of Nicaea,' CWE 39 432 n16. For the Nicene Creed as the Constantinopolitan Creed see *Explanatio symboli* CWE 70 265 and 299. Nelson Minnich and Daniel Sheerin suggest that the 'flashpoint' for much of the criticism directed towards Erasmus was located in Erasmus' view, as stated in the preface to the *Paraphrase on Matthew* (cf CWE 45 19 with n70), that the Apostles' Creed was not produced by the apostles; cf CWE 84 267 n952.

its name from the fact that it manifests the weight, the moderation, and also the brevity of apostolic speech – and would that our eagerness to believe had been satisfied with that one creed! When there began to be less faith among Christians, both the number and the size of the creeds grew.[316] And yet even the apostles, while they resemble Christ, do not rise to his majestic grandeur.

Nor, in truth, does the diversity in Christ bring this harmony into disorder. Rather, just as in song the sweetest harmony arises from different voices aptly ordered, so the diversity of Christ produces a fuller harmony. He became all things to all people but without ever compromising himself.[317] Sometimes he manifests the signs of his divinity – when he commands the winds and the sea, when he forgives sins, when on the mountain he presents to his disciples a new appearance, one more excellent than that of a human being.[318] At other times he plays the part of a human being, concealing his divinity – when he is hungry, thirsty, tired out from work, when in hunger he hurries to a fig tree, when he mourns, when he is afflicted and killed.[319] Certain men, without their asking, he calls to join him, some from their nets, Matthew from the toll house;[320] certain people who wish to follow him he rejects. Of this you have an example in Matthew, the eighth chapter, where a scribe says, 'Master, I will follow you wherever you go,' to whom Jesus replies, 'The foxes have holes and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man does not have where to lay his head' [8:19–20]. Again in the same passage he says to a man who seeks permission to leave, 'Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead' [8:22]. He feared for the latter that he should fall away; he knew that the former would be useless in work that would be anything but dainty and delicate. Delighted by the enthusiasm of Zacchaeus, he invites

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316 'Faith' (*fides*) here contrasts with 'eagerness to believe' (*credulitas*) just above, the latter carrying a negative connotation, according to Erasmus in his annotation on Rom 1:17 ('from faith to faith'). Cf *Explanatio symboli* CWE 70 253: 'The impious inquisitiveness of philosophers and the perversity of heretics gave rise to a multitude … of creeds,' a statement Erasmus had prefaced by noting, in addition to the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene, the Constantinopolitan, the Athanasian, and 'several others.'

317 Cf 1 Cor 9:22.

318 Cf Matt 8:23–7, Mark 4:35–41, Luke 8:22–5 (commands winds); Matt 9:2, Mark 2:5, Luke 5:20 (forgives sins); Matt 17:1–8, Mark 9:2–8, Luke 9:28–36 (is transfigured).

319 Cf John 4:6–7 (weariness, thirst); Matt 21:18–21, Mark 11:12–14 (hunger and the fig tree); John 11:35 (mourning).

320 Cf Matt 4:18–22, Mark 1:16–20, Luke 5:1–11 (fishers); Matt 9:9, Mark 2:14, Luke 5:27–8 (Matthew).

himself on his own initiative to his house, as you read in the nineteenth chapter of Luke.[321] Everywhere he censures Herod as an ungodly Jew and, for that reason, worse than the pagans. He calls him a fox in the thirteenth chapter of Luke: 'Go and tell that fox' [13:32]. When he was led to Herod, he did not deign even to address him.[322]

Sometimes he performed a miracle quite voluntarily, as though seizing an opportunity – the miracles, for example, of the fig tree that withered at his curse, of the crowd that was filled with a few loaves of bread, of Lazarus.[323] At other times he acted seemingly with reluctance and under compulsion. There is an example of this in the Gospel of John, when at the wedding he replies to his mother, who was inconspicuously pointing out to him the lack of wine: 'Woman, what have you to do with me? My hour is not yet come' [2:4]. Again, in Matthew, the seventeenth chapter, when he was asked to heal the epileptic whom his disciples were not able to help, deeply moved he exclaims: 'O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me' [17:17]. He listens to the Canaanite woman with reluctance – and only after she became importunate – and he does not comply immediately.[324] To the leper, on the contrary, he shows a ready compliance, saying, 'I will, be clean!' [Matthew 8:3]. Again, he flatly refuses to give the Pharisees a sign when they ask for one. He says, 'An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and a sign shall not be given it but the sign of the prophet Jonah' [Matthew 12:39]. In the same way in the sixteenth chapter he replies[325] to the Pharisees and Sadducees

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321 Cf Luke 19:1–10.

322 Cf Luke 23:9. Although of Idumaean origin, 'according to Jewish law [Herod the Great] was a full Jew (being the grandson of an Edomite proselyte),' *Encyclopedia Judaica* 2nd ed, ed Fred Skolnik and Michael Berenbaum (New York 2007) 9 36. The Herod of the biblical allusion here is Antipas, son of Herod the Great by Malthake, a Samaritan. Like his father, Antipas often disregarded traditional Jewish law and cultivated the good will of pagan Rome on whose power his authority rested; cf ibidem 2 204. Erasmus did not make a sustained effort to unravel the tangled history of the Herods until he was preparing the *1535* edition of the *Annotations*; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 367 with nn1589, 1590 and the reference there to the *1535* addition to the annotation on Acts 12:1 (*misit Herodes rex*); cf also CWE 50 80 n1. Jesus appears to have censured Herod at only one other point in the Gospels, Mark 8:15 (preferred text).

323 For the fig tree see n319 above; for the loaves, Matt 14:15–21 and 15:32–9, Mark 6:30–44 and 8:1–9, Luke 9:12–17, John 6:4–13; for Lazarus, John 11.

324 Cf Matt 15:22–8; Mark 7:24–30.

325 replies] First in *1520*; in *1519*, 'replied'

who were pressing him[326] to give some sign from heaven, 'You know how to discern the face of the sky; but can you not discern the signs of the times?' [Matthew 16:3].

In some places he demands silence after performing a miracle, as in Matthew, the ninth chapter, he gives to the blind men whom he had healed a menacing order, 'See that no one knows it' [9:30], well aware that they would spread the news abroad all the more. In precisely the same way in the same Gospel, the twelfth chapter, he instructed the many he had healed not to make him widely known.[327] However, in the fifth chapter of Mark he does not accept the healed demoniac as a companion; yet neither does he ask him to be silent, but to proclaim among his own people – not Jesus Christ, but what had happened to him through the kindness of God.[328] He demands a confession from his disciples, saying, 'But who do you say that I am?' [Matthew 16:15]. He enjoins silence upon the demon, who openly confessed that he was the Christ.[329] Again, elsewhere he claims gratitude from those who conceal the kindness they have received, for example, the woman who had ceased to haemorrhage after touching his cloak. He said, 'Who touched me?' and persisted until the woman acknowledged the kindness in the presence of everyone. Similarly, he accuses of ingratitude the nine lepers who, though Jews, nevertheless did not return to give the glory to God.[330]

There is also another kind of difference in the miracles he performs. He heals some people without any trouble, as when he raises a girl with a word, 'Little girl, I say to you, "Arise"' [Mark 5:41]. He smears[331] mud softened with spittle on the eyes of the blind man, and, content not even with this, he instructs him to wash in the pool of Siloam – and only then was the blind man aware of the kindness he had received in having his health restored.[332] Those ten lepers were not healed immediately but ordered to go to the priests; they were cleansed from leprosy as they went.[333] Further, when he

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326 him] First in *1522*; previously, 'Jesus'
327 Cf Matt 12:16.
328 Cf Mark 5:18–19.
329 Cf Mark 1:23–6; Luke 4:33–5. In both passages the demon acknowledges Jesus as the 'holy one of God.'
330 Cf Mark 5:25–34, Luke 8:43–8 (the woman); Luke 17:12–19 (the lepers). That the ungrateful lepers were Jews is implied by the narrative; cf *Paraphrase on Luke* where also the identification is made explicit, CWE 48 111–12.
331 smears … instructs] Present tense first in *1520*; in *1519*, past tense
332 Cf John 9:1–12.
333 Cf n330 above.

is about to raise Lazarus, he even sheds tears, groans in the spirit, asks to be shown the sepulchre, orders the stone removed, and thus calls forth the dead man with a piercing cry.[334] Sometimes he is angry and addresses the disease in a menacing tone.[335] It will be appropriate to philosophize where there are differences of this kind and to investigate with a pious curiosity the mystery of the divine plan.[336]

He changes likewise in his responses. To those who ask questions to trick him he replies warily and obliquely – to the Pharisees, for example, who ask about divorcing one's wife, about paying tribute to Caesar, about the great commandment. When a coin is shown to him, he takes the opportunity to point out what they were not doing, since this was above all else what mattered. He retorts that their liberty in divorce had not been conceded on the basis of what was right but granted to their unconquerable ill will.[337] Likewise with respect to the commandment, he shows that they were not doing what they knew should above all else be done.[338] He attributes knowledge of the Law to the Pharisees, though he refuses to acknowledge their piety; he

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334 Cf John 11:32–44.

335 Jesus expresses anger in Mark 3:5; he 'rebukes' (*minatur*) unclean spirits in Mark 1:25 and 9:25 (cf VG *comminatus est* in both verses), while in John 2:13–17 Jesus' action in driving out the merchants from the temple is interpreted as 'consuming zeal.' But Erasmus may have in mind as well such passages as Mark 1:43 and Matt 9:30 where he annotated the Greek word *ἐμβριμάομαι*, noting in the annotation on Matthew (*et comminatus est eis*) that the word meant 'to threaten harshly as though in anger.' Cf n355 below.

336 The sentence affirms an important qualification of Erasmus' occasional criticism of 'philosophizing' and his frequent attacks on *curiositas*. The imaginative exploration of Scripture leading to insights conducive to genuine piety – conducive because they open up the significance of saving-history for Christian living – is 'philosophizing' emerging from 'pious curiosity.' See 'New Testament Scholarship' 116, 118 with nn498, 509, *Methodus* 444 with n95, *Ratio* 632 with n744 and 620 with n954, and on 'pious curiosity,' *Methodus* 427 with n14.

337 'Ill will': *malitia*; cf CWE 50 30 n45 and *Enchiridion* CWE 66 38: 'The dregs of impurity accumulated from every species of vice is called "stupidity" by the Stoics … but in our holy writings it is called "malice."'

338 Cf Matt 22:15–21, Mark 12:13–17, Luke 20:20–6 (tribute); Matt 19:3–9, Mark 10:1–12 (divorce); Matt 22:34–40, Mark 12:28–34, Luke 10:25–8 (the great commandment). The assertion that the Pharisees leave undone the most important things may, in addition, echo Matt 23:23–4 and Luke 11:42. Only Matthew consistently ascribes all three questions to the Pharisees. Erasmus interprets these passages similarly in his *Paraphrase on Matthew*; cf especially the paraphrase on Matt 19:8 where 'hard-heartedness' is interpreted as 'human malice' and a 'nature infected by vices,' CWE 45 271.

condemns the Sadducees for their folly because of their dull-witted inquiry, for they were men who did not understand what they read.[339] Sometimes he gives no answer but retorts to a question with a question, like driving out a nail with a nail.[340] For example, when asked by what authority he did what he was doing, he asks, in turn, whether they thought the baptism of John was from heaven or of human origin.[341] Elsewhere he does indeed reply but follows up[342] a question with a question – as in Matthew, the twenty-second chapter, he asks the Pharisees, 'Whose son is Christ?' And when they had replied, 'David's,' he says, 'How does David, speaking in the Spirit, call him his Lord when he is his son?'[343] In Mark, the twenty-sixth chapter, he says nothing in response to the witnesses; just so in the twenty-seventh chapter he is completely silent before Herod.[344] In the presence of Pilate he responds with a very few words, but not to everything; he says nothing to Caiaphas. Though bound, beaten, mocked, he makes no response; he does respond when struck with a blow. On the cross he said not a word in the face of the reproaches of the Jews, but he cannot restrain himself at the lamentation of the women who followed him.[345]

Sometimes he avoids the crowd, as though he found it wearisome; again, at other times, moved by compassion, he seeks the crowds of his own accord and allows them to press in closely upon him.[346] At one time he draws into the deepest solitude to pray; at another time he voluntarily takes himself to a very crowded assembly in the temple; at another, he stealthily slips from

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339 Cf eg Matt 23:1–13 (Pharisees); Matt 22:23–32, Mark 12:18–27 (Sadducees). In his paraphrase on Matt 23:1–13 CWE 45 312–16 Erasmus forcefully interprets the character of the Pharisees portrayed here.

340 Cf *Adagia* I ii 4.

341 Cf Matt 21:23–7; Mark 11:27–33; Luke 20:1–8.

342 follows up] *resequitur*; in Froben *1519* and *1523* only, *prosequitur* 'pursues'

343 Cf Matt 22:41–5.

344 'Mark' is clearly a mistake for 'Matthew'; cf Matt 26:59–63. The encounter with Herod is narrated only in Luke 23:6–12.

345 Cf Matt 27:11–14 (encounter with Pilate); Matt 26:57–64 and Mark 14:53–62 (encounter with Caiaphas): in both Gospels Jesus, though silent at first, eventually responds briefly to the high priest. In John 18:19–24 Jesus responds at some length to the high priest. For the binding, beating, and mockery see Matt 26:67, 27:1–2, 27–31 and Mark 14:65, 15:1–20; for the blow, John 18:19–23; for the reproaches of the Jews, Matt 27:39–43, Mark 15:29–32, Luke 23:35–7; for the lamentation of the women (*mulierculis*), Luke 23:27–8.

346 Jesus may be thought to avoid the crowd in such passages as Matt 8:18, 14:13; Mark 3:9, 6:46–7; John 6:15. For Jesus' compassion on the crowds see Matt 9:36, Mark 6:34; for the press of the crowd see Mark 2:2, 5:24, 31 and Luke 8:19–21. Jesus welcomes the crowd in Luke 9:11.

the hands of those who were lying in wait for him, for example, when he had been led to a mountain so that they might hurl him down from it; and again he secretly vanishes when the crowd was going to stone him.[347] He entrusts to the disciples certain things they should preach; certain things he confides that are to remain unspoken for a time – the vision, for example, on Mount Tabor and the secret conversation with Moses concerning his death.[348] He speaks in one way to his disciples, in another way to the common crowd.[349] Finally, he shows himself to his disciples after the resurrection now in one form, now in another.[350] Thus, though nothing is more straightforward than our Christ, yet with some hidden intent he represents a kind of Proteus by the variety of his life and teaching.[351] This will perhaps be a cause of wonder to our new theological recruit, but for a person who is practised and attentive it will not be difficult to track down the circumstances of the individual cases.

But we stumble less over such passages than we do over those that at first glance seem even contradictory.[352] Cases of this are the following: in

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347 Cf Mark 1:35 (withdraws to pray); Luke 4:28–30 (escapes from those lying in wait); John 8:59 (escapes stoning). The reference to the crowded assembly in the temple may allude to passages where the narrative implies large numbers, eg Matt 21:12–24:1; Mark 11:11–13:1; Luke 19:45–21:38. Cf also John 7:10–44, where the 'crowds' are said to be present.

348 Cf Matt 10:5–7, Luke 9:1–2 (message to be preached); Matt 17:1–9, Mark 9:1–9 (message to remain unspoken). Luke alone records that the conversation with Moses and Elijah concerned the 'departure' of Jesus (9:31). In Matt 17:9 and Mark 9:9 Jesus forbids the disciples to report the vision; in Luke 9:36 the disciples 'did not report what they had seen'; see the paraphrase on Luke 9:36 CWE 47 258, where Erasmus explains the reasons for the secrecy. The Gospels do not identify the mountain as Tabor, but cf *Paraclesis* n88; also CWE 44 114 n24.

349 For the distinction in audience see eg Matt 13:10–17; Mark 4:10–12.

350 The appearance of Jesus in different forms after the resurrection is described especially in the narratives of Luke 24 and of John 20 and 21; cf also Acts 1:3.

351 Alberto Pio found the image of Proteus here particularly offensive: 'How many blasphemies, you utter,' he wrote; cf CWE 84 300 n1131. Erasmus appealed to the image in Protean fashion: as an image for theological allegory (*De copia* CWE 24 611); to describe the changing passions of the soul (*Enchiridion* CWE 66 49–50); the slippery evasiveness of heretics (*In psalmum 1* CWE 63 17); the exegesis of Thomas Aquinas (annotation on Rom 1:4 ['who was predestined'] CWE 56 10 and n9). Cf *Adagia* II ii 74, III iv 1. For Proteus in classical literature see *Ratio* 675 with n980.

352 The discussion of difficulties in the biblical narrative, especially those difficulties that arise from apparent inconsistencies and contradictions, had been an important feature of biblical exegesis from antiquity and became a significant aspect of Erasmus' *Annotations*; cf n362 below and 'New Testament Scholarship' 137 with n570.

the Gospel of John Christ denies that John the Baptist is the light,[353] though later he declares of the same John, 'He was a burning, shining light' [John 5:35]; and when he says to the still unformed apostles, 'You are the light of the world' [Matthew 5:14], likewise when he says, 'My teaching is not mine' [John 7:16], if anyone pays attention only to the surface meaning of the words, there seem to be inconsistencies. Again, in John, the sixth chapter, when he says, 'He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has everlasting life' [6:54], but a little later, 'It is the Spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail' [6:63], does he not seem to be saying things that are contradictory? What you find in the next chapter is very similar. Although Jesus had said, 'You both know me and you know from where I came' [7:28], he soon adds, as though disagreeing with himself, 'He who sent me is true, whom you do not know' [7:28]. Somewhere he says that he judges no one;[354] elsewhere he testifies saying, 'The Father has given all judgment to the Son' [John 5:22]. He forbids his disciples to be angry, though we read that he himself had been moved by anger.[355]

Moreover, in certain narratives the apparent variation lay open to the slander of the ungodly. For example, Matthew reports one blind man healed, though Luke affirms that two were healed[356] – likewise when sometimes one name seems to be substituted for another, when Stephen, in Acts, the seventh chapter,[357] seems to tell the story somewhat differently from the way it is found in Genesis, in[358] the twelfth chapter, that is.[359] Further,[360] in the number of years there is considerable inconsistency, and here and there the observant

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353 Cf John 1:8.
354 Cf John 8:15.
355 Cf Matt 5:22 (Jesus forbids anger); Mark 3:5 (Jesus is moved by anger); cf *Ratio* n335.
356 A reference apparently to Matt 9:27–31, 20:29–34, and Luke 18:35–43, where, however, one blind man is found in Luke's narrative, two in Matthew's; but cf Matt 12:22, where one man, both blind and deaf, was healed.
357 the seventh chapter] Added in *1520*
358 in ... that is.] Added in *1520*
359 In Gen 12:1–6 God's call comes to Abram in Haran, and he moves to Canaan; in Acts 7:2–4 God's call comes to Abraham in Mesopotamia 'before he lived in Haran'; he then moves to Haran, and later to Canaan. In addition, the narrative in Acts has substituted 'Abraham' for the 'Abram' of the Genesis passage.
360 Further ... Gospels.] Added in *1523*

reader has trouble with the order of events in the Gospels.[361] If difficulties of this sort sometimes arise, one should not be offended or doubt the trustworthiness of what is written, but should consider carefully all the details and then look for a way to resolve the problem. Our predecessors toiled with sweat in this very task; their assiduous efforts will help us if we do not find an answer that satisfies the mind.[362]

Now, we must also attend carefully to the proofs by which Christ demonstrated his double nature of God and man. For who would hope for true salvation from one who was simply a man? On the other hand, who would believe that a being that is entirely and unconditionally God suffers anything? But he wanted us to return his love by loving him as a true man, who truly suffered for us, and not to doubt that he would fulfil what he had promised, since he was truly God. What of the fact that not even his example would be sufficiently effective if what was done in Christ was not done with true feelings, but was a sort of stage play, merely fictional, presented to the eyes? Of his human nature the signs are that he is conceived in the womb of a woman, of his divine nature that he is conceived from the Holy Spirit, of his human nature that he is born of a pregnant woman in the regular time, of his divine nature that his conception is without the agency of a man.

That he was true man is shown by the fact that he repeatedly calls himself the son of Adam, by the fact that he grows up gradually in accordance with the customary stages of life,[363] by the fact that he eats, sleeps, hungers, thirsts, grows weary from a journey, by the fact that he is moved by human feelings. We read that he often pities the crowd, as in the twentieth chapter of

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361 Cf eg the problems in determining the number of years in *Paraphrase on Acts* 7:6 and 13:20 CWE 50 50 n11 and 86 n44. For difficulties in the order of events in the Gospels see eg the story of the cleansing of the temple, placed at the beginning of Jesus' ministry in John 2:13–22, but at the end of the ministry in the synoptic Gospels, for which see Matt 21:12–13; Mark 11:15–19; Luke 19:45–6.

362 Cf *Ratio* n352. Even in the final edition of 1535 Erasmus continued to find exegetical difficulties, the solution of which challenged the biblical scholar; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 367 with n1587.

363 By 'son of Adam' Erasmus refers to the title 'Son of Man' used frequently in the Gospels, eg in Matt 8:20, 9:6; Mark 2:10, 28, etc. Cf the annotation on Matt 8:20 (*filius hominis*), added in *1519*, where Erasmus explains that 'Christ calls himself the Son of Man because he was a descendant of Adam.' In his *Paraphrases* Erasmus often retains the expression 'Son of Man,' but sometimes with a qualification that points to the lowliness, ignominy, and servant ministry of Christ, eg in the paraphrases on Matt 16:27 CWE 45 250 and Mark 2:10 CWE 49 33, while in the paraphrase on Matt 20:28 CWE 45 288–9 Christ refers to himself as Son

Matthew.[364] In Mark, the third chapter, he is angry and grieves; in the eighth chapter of the same Gospel he groans in the spirit.[365] Again, in the twelfth chapter of John, long before the passion, he is troubled in mind; in the garden he suffers anguish of mind to the point of sweating bloody drops.[366] On the cross he thirsts, the usual result of that kind of punishment.[367] He weeps after looking upon the city of Jerusalem, and at the tomb of Lazarus he both weeps and is troubled in mind.[368]

On the other side, his divine nature was disclosed by so many miracles performed – and[369] so easily and with such efficacious power – for he preferred that his divinity be shown by deeds rather than words. And yet even with words he bears witness that he is the Son of God sent from heaven, and that he had been in heaven and was in heaven when he was dwelling on the earth and repeatedly insisting again and again that God was his Father.[370]

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of God, stressing, however, his lowly office as servant, implied here in the Matthean expression 'Son of Man.' Cf *Apologia ad Fabrum* CWE 83 46. For Jesus' 'gradual growth' see Luke 2:40, 52 and *Ratio* 548 with n295.

364 Cf Matt 20:29–34, where, however, it is the blind men that Jesus pities (20:34), not the crowd that follows him. For Jesus' pity towards the crowds see eg Matt 14:14.

365 Cf Mark 3:5 (Jesus is angry), 8:12 (Jesus groans).

366 Cf John 12:27, where, however, the setting (cf John 12:1, 12) places the event only 'a few days before Passover.' Luke alone describes the bloody sweat in the garden (22:43–4), but these Lukan verses are not well attested (cf RSV). In his annotation on Luke 22:44 (*guttae sanguinis decurrentis in terram* [*1522*, with additions in *1527* and *1535*]) Erasmus reports that some patristic authors acknowledge the omission of these verses from some manuscripts, but he concludes that they had been 'removed by those who were afraid to attribute to Christ such extraordinary signs of human weakness.' Cf *De taedio Iesu* CWE 70 19–20 with n29.

367 Cf John 19:28. For Erasmus' explanation of the thirst see the paraphrase on John 19:28 CWE 46 213 with n38.

368 Cf Luke 19:41; John 11:33, 35. The paraphrase on John 1:14 CWE 46 23 describes at length the signs of the human and divine nature of Christ.

369 and ... power] Added in *1523*. See the annotation on Rom 1:4 ('in power') CWE 56 15–16 for a brief exposition of the 'double nature of Christ.'

370 See the paraphrase on John 1:1–2 and the preceding preface for an exposition on the relation between Father and Son, CWE 46 15–17. That the Son was in heaven and is in heaven even while on earth is explained by the doctrine of the double generation of the Son: begotten once in time from the Virgin, eternally begotten of the Father outside time; cf CWE 46 17. The view is repeated in the paraphrase on John 3:12–15 CWE 46 47–8, and related to the special sense in which it was said that Jesus was sent from God; cf ibidem 48 n30. In the paraphrase on Acts

Even the Jews understood this when they said, 'Though you are a man, you make yourself God' [John 10:33]. Last of all, when he rises from the dead, when he is carried to heaven, when he sends the Paraclete, who suddenly makes new men of the apostles. But just as this can be noted briefly, so it would extend the discussion too far to expand upon each point.

It also seems to belong to the careful investigation of the divine plan that we note in how many ways [God] wanted it to be manifest that the Jews, who long ago had been promised the Messiah and had awaited him, had through their own fault been rejected on account of their incredulity, while the gentiles had been received into their place because of simple faith.[371] Christ knew the hardness of his own race, a race that was farther from true righteousness for the very reason that it was puffed up with a false opinion of righteousness.[372] He knew that this was a race utterly given to malicious accusation; accordingly, he did everything to prevent them from having occasion to expostulate with God that they were cheated of the promises beyond what they deserved. The prophets had predicted that the gentiles would by faith break through to the grace of the gospel, while the Jews would by their own moral failing fall away from the promises.[373] He wanted to be born among those to whom he had been promised. He was heralded in song by the angels, proclaimed by the shepherds, revealed by the Magi, acknowledged by Simeon and Anna, pointed out by John the Baptist, commended by the utterance of the Father.[374] He became well known through many miracles, he invited

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1:11 Erasmus wrote that in his Ascension Jesus did not put off 'the body assumed' but 'sits with his human nature in the glory of the Father,' CWE 50 9 n56. For Jesus' insistent claim that God was his Father see eg John 5:17–40, especially 17–18.

371 Cf Romans 9–11 and the paraphrase on these chapters, CWE 42 52–69.

372 Cf the paraphrase on Matt 10:5–6 CWE 45 166–7 with n10.

373 That 'the gentiles would by faith break through' is a reference to the dominical saying recorded in both Matt 11:12 and Luke 16:16. It is interpreted here as in the paraphrases on these verses; cf CWE 45 185–6 with n25 and CWE 48 96–7 with n18. The New Testament writers interpreted prophetic writings as predictions of the exclusion of Jews and the inclusion of gentiles. This exegetical tradition is carried on from early postcanonical times; cf eg Cyprian *Adversus Iudaeos* 1.3 (the Jews would not accept Christ) and 1.20–3 (the gentiles would be admitted to the people of God). Cyprian cites such passages as Isa 1:2–4, 6:9–10 and Jer 2:13, 6:10 (*Adversus Iudaeos* 1.3); Isa 5:25–6, 9:1–2, 65:1 (*Adversus Iudaeos* 1.21).

374 The stories of the birth and infancy of Jesus are familiar from Luke 2 and Matt 2:1–15; John the Baptist points to Christ in John 1:29, 36 (cf *Ratio* n292 ); the 'commendation' of the Father by the voice from heaven at Jesus' baptism is recorded in Matt 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22.

them with so many kindnesses, he taught such salutary doctrines, and yet no advantage was derived from these things. Blinded by envy, arrogance, and avarice, they killed the prophets, did not believe John, falsely and slanderously charged that the miracles were done with the help of Beelzebub, persecuted Christ himself.[375] And yet all the while they took pride in the empty title of the Law and in a temple worthy of veneration throughout the world, saying, 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.'[376]

The Magi are the first of all to worship the boy; Herod, the Jew, persecutes him.[377] When Christ at first had commissioned his disciples for the work of the gospel, he forbade them to go into the cities of the Samaritans,[378] and he did so with the specific design that the Jews should not find a captious reason to quibble[379] on the grounds that they had been neglected by Christ. He calls a tax collector, who leaves all and follows him.[380] The Pharisees, who had been invited in so many ways, set themselves to oppose. He offers them examples of faith from those whom they regarded as detestable and wicked. He presents to view the Canaanite woman, to whom at first he barely listened, then even thrust her back with an insult, but she conquered through her unconquerable faith, and forced Christ, as it were, to do a kindness – for is there anyone whom that cry of the woman would not successfully assault: 'Yes, Lord, for even the little dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters' [Matthew 15:27]?[381] Do you hear, proud Jew, the Canaanite woman's

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375 Cf Matt 23:29–36, Luke 11:47–52 (killing the prophets); Matt 21:25–32, Mark 11:31, Luke 20:1–8 (disbelieving John); Matt 12:24, Mark 3:22, Luke 11:15 (Beelzebub). Erasmus frequently attributes the Jews' rejection of Christ to their blindness; cf the paraphrase on John 12:35–40 CWE 46 156–7.

376 Cf Jer 7:4. For the temple 'venerated throughout the world' see the paraphrase on Acts 21:28 CWE 50 128 with n33.

377 Cf Matt 2:1–18. 'Worship' (2:11) translates *adorant* (VG *adoraverunt*, Greek *προσεκύνησαν*, DV 'adored,' AV 'worshipped,' NRSV 'paid homage'). Although from the narrative of Luke 2:15–20 we assume that the shepherds found Jesus before the Magi, the shepherds are not said to have worshipped him. On Herod as a Jew cf *Ratio* n322.

378 Cf Matt 10:5.

379 find a captious reason to quibble] First in *1523*; previously, 'criticize'

380 Cf Matt 9:9; Mark 2:14; Luke 5:27–8; only Luke observes that Levi 'left all.'

381 Cf Matt 15:21–8; Mark 7:24–30. The image of violence ('forced ... assault') alludes to the saying of Jesus in Matt 11:12 and Luke 16:16. The allusion is persistent in Erasmus' work: cf n373 above, also the paraphrase on Acts 1:6 CWE 50 7 with n37, the annotation on Rom 9:6 ('for not all') CWE 56 253 with n7, *Enchiridion* CWE 66 56 with n2, *De immensa Dei misericordia* CWE 70 136: 'to "knock" is to … do violence … to God's mercy.'

modesty filled with trust? She, though rejected thus, nevertheless presses on and insists; you can be enticed by no kindness. Accordingly, she hears, 'O woman, great is your faith. Be it done for you as you desire' [Matthew 15:28]. What do the Jews hear? 'Your house shall be left to you, desolate' [Matthew 23:38]. And in Matthew, the twenty-first chapter, he openly casts in their teeth that the tax collectors and the harlots were, because of their ardent faith, going into the kingdom of God before such Jews.[382]

In Matthew, the eighth chapter, there is introduced the example of the centurion who trusted Christ so completely that he thought it of no importance for Christ to come to his house, since Christ could bestow health by his word and assent.[383] How do you feel about this, unhappy Jew? A centurion, outside the sacred circle of God's people[384] and an army officer, a man who had not read the prophets, trusts Christ thus. And do you cry out against your Saviour, awaited now for so many ages? Accordingly, he deserves to hear, 'Verily I say to you, I have not found so great faith in Israel' [8:10]. But to you what does he say? No doubt what we read in Luke, the eleventh chapter, 'The queen of the South will arise in judgment against the men of this generation and will condemn them, because she came to Jerusalem from the outermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon' [11:31]. He whose wisdom makes the wisdom of Solomon seem as nothing, willingly showed himself to you – and are you reluctant to hear him? The people of Ninevah, who accepted the preaching of Jonah, will do the same; you spurn him with whom Jonah is not to be compared.[385] The example of Zacchaeus, who had climbed a tree in his eagerness to see Christ, is introduced. You hear, greedy Jew, an unholy man bearing witness[386] about himself, 'Half of my goods I give to the poor' [Luke 19:8], so that you might understand that the kingdom of God is promised not to race but to life and faith. Therefore in your pres-

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382 Cf Matt 21:31.

383 Cf Matt 8:5–13.

384 'Outside the sacred circle of God's people': *profanus*; cf *Methodus* n49; also *Enchiridion* CWE 66 95, where 'layman' renders *profanus* and is opposed to *clericus* 'clergy.' Cf *Ratio* n227 and the paraphrase on Rom 11:24 CWE 42 66: the gentile converts were once 'members of a profane [*prophanus*] race.'

385 Cf Luke 11:32; for Jonah's preaching at Ninevah see Jon 3:1–10.

386 bearing witness] First in *1522*; previously, 'testifying.' 'Unholy' renders *profanum*, indicating that as a tax collector Zacchaeus would not have belonged to the covenant people, an implication of Luke 19:9; cf the paraphrase on the story (Luke 19:1–10), where Zacchaeus is represented as both type and first fruits of the gentiles; cf CWE 48 130–9.

ence Zacchaeus hears, 'Today salvation has come to this house, since this also is a child of Abraham' [Luke 19:9].[387]

A race that is naturally jealous – is it not incited to emulation by however many examples? is it not moved even by so many parables?[388] In Luke, the eighteenth chapter, he introduces for you a tax collector: the man is a sinner, but he is humble, he implores mercy, and he is preferred to the just man who is proud.[389] In the seventeenth chapter he draws a portrait of yourself, when the nine Jewish lepers hide the kindness bestowed; only the Samaritan returns and gives thanks.[390] He signifies the same thing by the parable of the wounded man: the Jews pass him by; only a Samaritan takes him up to care for him.[391] We find the same point made in two parables in Matthew, the twenty-first chapter. The first parable is about two sons one of whom promised his father he would carry out his orders but did not, the other, though he refused at first, soon came to his senses and did what he said he would not do. The second parable is about the wicked tenants, who after first maltreating the slaves, finally killed the very son and heir.[392] So the evangelist adds: 'And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they knew that he spoke of them' [21:45]. Although they knew they were guilty, so far were they from any thought of repentance that there follows: 'And seeking to lay hands on him, they feared the multitudes' [21:46].

Moving in the same direction also is the parable that immediately follows about those invited to the wedding.[393] In some cases the Jews offer excuses, in some cases they offer insult and injury to the slaves who were inviting them to the banquet.[394] Rightly, therefore, are the Jews[395] passed over, and the wedding tables are filled with an indiscriminate crowd of gentiles.

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387 Erasmus quotes his own translation (from *1519*), which makes 'this' in the concluding clause refer to 'house.' In his annotation on Luke 19:9 (*eo quod et ipse filius sit Abrahae*) he explains that on this reading 'house' stands for the *paterfamilias*.

388 Cf the paraphrase on Rom 11:11–14 CWE 42 64–5 on the innate jealousy of the Jews. Erasmus explains the relation between 'jealousy' and 'emulation' in the Jewish response to grace in the annotation on Rom 11:11 ('that they may emulate them').

389 Cf Luke 18:9–14.

390 Cf Luke 17:11–19; cf *Ratio* n330.

391 Cf Luke 10:30–7.

392 Cf Matt 21:28–32 (two sons) and 21:33–43 (wicked tenants).

393 Cf Matt 22:1–10.

394 to the banquet.] First in *Schoeffer 1519*

395 the Jews] First in *1523*; previously, 'these'

For what would you do with those who, when invited to salvation, stubbornly vent their anger against the one who is kindly caring for their interests? The parable of the hired labourers employed to do work in the vineyard has in view the same end – for the Jews murmur against us who have come later and nevertheless have been made equal to them in the grace of the gospel.[396] I think the parable of the prodigal son also focuses on this point. In this parable the son who had maintained the justice of the Law is angry at his brother who had long wandered afar in the mazes of error but then came to his senses and repented, and for this reason[397] was received with joy by a merciful father back into the family.[398] The Jew recalls his own good deeds, while the pagan does not have the sins of his former life cast in his teeth. In my opinion, the theme is exactly the same in the parable of the coin that was lost and found; in the parable of the wandering sheep brought back to the flock; in the parable of the fig tree that was still unfruitful after three years and was to be cut down in the fourth year unless it ceased to be unfruitful once manure had been applied;[399] in the parable of the children sitting in the market place, chanting in alternation among themselves: 'We played the pipes and you did not dance; we sang a dirge and you did not mourn' [Luke 7:32].

In these ways, so various, our most excellent Saviour wanted the obstinacy of the Jews made evident, an obstinancy worthy of their destruction. At the same time he was also reordering the minds of the disciples still somewhat tainted with Judaism, so that they should not be averse to receiving pagans into the fellowship of the gospel. For Peter, after he had heard from Christ, 'Go into the entire world and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,'[400] after the heavenly Spirit had been received, does not dare to receive Cornelius unless

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396 Cf Matt 20:1–16; and for the interpretation of this parable see the expository preface to the paraphrase on it, CWE 45 281–2. On the Erasmian theme of equal access for all to the grace of the gospel see CWE 50 8 n45.

397 for this reason] In *Froben 1519*, 'for these reasons'

398 Cf Luke 15:11–32.

399 Cf Luke 15:8–10 (lost coin); Luke 15:3–7, Matt 18:12–14 (lost sheep); Luke 13:6–9 (fig tree).

400 Cf Matt 28:19, the first half of the verse, however, reflecting Acts 1:8, as in the *Paraphrase on Matthew* CWE 45 377. The immediately subsequent allusion to the heavenly Spirit also refers to Acts 1:8.

warned in a vision.[401] In like manner, in John, the tenth chapter, Jesus advises the disciples about the future, saying, 'I have other sheep also that I must bring, and there shall be one flock' [10:16]. Again, in Luke, 'The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and everyone uses violence towards it.'[402] Pagans, who were outside, broke into it by force; the Jews, who were within, were shut out because of their distrust. Jerusalem was turned into Sodom, and where formerly it used to be said, 'not my people,' there they are called the children of God.[403] These words, spoken in a past era, belong to those ancient times; even so, they can also be applied to every period of time. Every age has its own Pharisees; every age is at risk if it misuses the kindnesses of God.

Next after this it seems good to note in how many ways Christ wanted his own innocence to be made evident to all, so that no one should find anything with which to disparage the authority of this teacher.[404] He wanted to be born of parents who, though of humble means, were nevertheless blameless and upright, not because in the eyes of God the sins of the parents are imputed to the children, but because the custom generally prevails that anything perpetrated by the parents is thrown up against the children more cruelly than against the actual perpetrators of the wicked deeds.[405] The[406] widespread popular saying is by no means without grounds, 'From the ugly

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401 For the divine admonition see Acts 10:19–20 and 28–9. In the paraphrases on Acts 10:17 and 23, and on 11:1 CWE 50 71, 72, 76–7 Erasmus rationalizes Peter's reluctance.

402 The citation mingles Luke 16:16 with Matt 11:12 as found in the Vulgate and Erasmus' New Testament. For the significance of the image in Erasmus' writings cf *Ratio* n381.

403 Cf Gen 19:24–9 (destruction of Sodom). The two final clauses in the sentence allude to Hos 1:8–10, 2:23; Rom 9:25–6; and 1 Pet 2:10. From Christian antiquity, Christians regarded the destruction of Jerusalem as a sign that the Jews were no longer 'God's people'; cf Cyprian *Adversus Iudaeos* 1.6. Cf CWE 50 9 n68 and *Ratio* n373.

404 Cf *Ratio* 548 with n293, where Christ appears as 'a model of all innocence.'

405 For sins imputed to children see Exod 34:7 and Num 14:18. Cf the paraphrase on Luke 3:23: Christ chose to come from a home 'unspotted by any rumour of stain … the common human view is that good children are scarcely ever born of evil parents' CWE 47 119.

406 The ... egg.'] Added in *1522*. For the popular saying see Juvenal *Satires* 13.142; and Hans Walther *Proverbia sententiaeque Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 9 vols (Göttingen 1963–9) VIII #38106 (I have gratefully received this reference from Alexander Dalzell).

raven comes the bad egg.' Indeed, he wanted to have even a guardian[407] who was upright, of whom you read in Matthew, 'Whereupon Joseph, being a just man' [1:19].[408] Angels from heaven give their witness about the boy. Magi acknowledge his divinity with their gifts. Shepherds tell abroad what they had seen. Simeon embraces the infant awaited so many ages. Anna, a widow most pure, adds a corroborating witness. God the Father time and again cries out from heaven, 'This is my beloved son; hear him.'[409] Many were the times that John gave witness about him. Even the demons acknowledge and confess that he is the Son of God, although he is loathe to be proclaimed by them. Many are the times that the crowd wonders at the divine power in him.[410] In John, the seventh chapter, even the officers who were sent to arrest and take him give their witness, 'Never did a man speak like this man' [7:46]. Martha confesses, 'You are the Christ, the Son of God who was to come into this world' [John 11:27].[411] The Samaritan woman confesses, 'You are a prophet' [John 4:19]. The apostles confess, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God' [Matthew 16:16]. For Christ frees from all sin anyone who acknowledges God.[412]

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407 guardian] *nutricium* in *1523* only; previously, *vitricum* 'stepfather.' In the *Paraphrases* Erasmus is generally careful to qualify the relation of Jesus to Joseph. Cf the paraphrases on Matt 1:25 CWE 45 45: '… to this degree' he was 'fulfilling the role of father'; on John 1:45 CWE 46 36: 'Jesus was still thought by everyone to be the son of Joseph'; and on Luke 3:23, where Erasmus as paraphrast explains that Joseph was Jesus' father legally, but the relationship of Joseph to Jesus was concealed to facilitate the preaching of the gospel; cf CWE 47 119.

408 On the special 'justice' of Joseph see the annotation on Matt 1:19 (*cum esset vir iustus*) ASD VI-5 78:308–24.

409 The birth stories indicated are found in Matthew 2 and Luke 2. The quotation in the form given here follows closely the text of Luke 9:35 and Mark 9:7, combining the versions of Erasmus and the Vulgate. Note the similar expressions in Matt 3:17, 17:5; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22.

410 Cf Matt 3:11–14, Mark 1:7–8, Luke 3:15–17, John 1:19–36 (John's witness); Mark 3:11–12 (witness of the demons and Jesus' reluctance); Matt 7:28–9 and 13:54–5, Mark 5:42 and 7:37 (astonishment of the crowd).

411 For the last clause, 'who was to come ...,' Erasmus follows his own translation; similarly NEB, but RSV reads 'who is coming into the world.' Cf the annotation on John 11:27 (*qui in hunc mundum*).

412 Cf the paraphrase on Matt 16:19: '[One will enter the kingdom of heaven] if having confessed before you [Peter] what you have confessed, he is freed from his sins by baptism' CWE 45 247.

Pilate also witnesses, 'I am free from the blood of this just man; see to it yourselves' [Matthew 27:24]; his wife witnesses, too, 'Have[413] no dealings with that just man' [Matthew 27:19]. Caiaphas, inspired by the prophetic spirit adds his witness, 'It is expedient for you that one man should die for the people and that the whole nation should not perish' [John 11:50].[414] Even the hostile judges acknowledge his innocence, rejecting the testimony of many; the witnesses themselves also show that they had been suborned and were lying.[415] They have no charge to bring against him except a statement about destroying the temple and building it again, and they bring forward this statement itself in a sense different from that intended and cast up at him what they had not understood.[416] Unhappy Judas also confesses, 'I have sinned in betraying innocent blood' [Matthew 27:4]. At the cross the centurion confesses, 'Truly this was the Son of God' [Mark 15:39]. The wicked Pharisees also confess, who had no charge to bring against the crucified except that he was going to destroy the temple of God and raise it in three days.[417] So free was he from any misdeed that no story could even be invented against him with any credibility.

After this the piously curious reader will note in what ways or with what design Christ brought over to his own tenets an entire world divided into so many religions. For he did not subjugate the kingdoms of the world by machines of war, not through the syllogisms of philosophers or the

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413 'Have ... man'] First in this form in *1520*, when the citation followed closely ER; in *1519* Erasmus cited the Vulgate, a literal translation from the Greek. Erasmus' translation (from *1516*) turned the Greek into classical Latin idiom; cf the annotation on Mark 1:24 (*quid nobis et tibi*).

414 For Caiaphas' prophetic inspiration see John 11:51–2 and the paraphrase on 11:51: '… because of the priestly office [Caiaphas] held, the spirit of prophecy sent forth through the mouth of a sinful man a sinless prediction …' CWE 46 147.

415 Cf Matt 26:59–65; Mark 14:55–9. The paraphrases on these passages stress the innocence of Jesus; cf CWE 45 358–9 and CWE 49 165–6.

416 Cf Matt 26:60–1; Mark 14:58. For the 'sense intended' see John 2:19–21. Cf also the annotation (added *1519*) on John 2:19 (*solvite templum hoc etc*), where Erasmus notes the ambiguity of the Greek word ἐγείρω 'raise' used in the sense of either 'to raise a building' or 'to raise, ie arouse, someone lying down.'

417 A reference evidently to Matt 27:62–4, interpreted in light of passages cited in n416. The Pharisees are associated with the priests in the arrest of Jesus (John 1:3) but are otherwise absent from the narrative of the trial of Jesus before the council and before Pilate.

enthymemes of the rhetoricians,[418] not through wealth, not[419] through honours, not through the enticements of pleasures. He did not want any human aids to be mixed with this business, which he wanted to be due entirely to heaven. In the first place, the agreement of so many prophecies helped to induce trust, prophecies with which John's testimony agreed – for Christ did not suddenly renew the world. It is extremely difficult to root out of the human mind what we have imbibed from childhood, what has with common agreement been handed down from our ancestors.[420] Long ago John played the prelude in the baptism of repentance; the apostles played the prelude announcing not yet the Messiah but only that the kingdom of heaven was at hand.[421] Christ begins the work through men uneducated and of humble station so that the world should not on this score claim anything for itself.[422] He puts up with these same men, long untrusting and unformed, so that they should not seem to have believed rashly. Thomas distrusts with a most

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418 Some ancient rhetoricians called the enthymeme a 'rhetorical syllogism' or an 'incomplete syllogism' and distinguished it from the regular syllogism by the fact that its parts were less clearly defined or less complete, but both Cicero and Quintilian say that, properly speaking, the enthymeme was an argument drawn from incompatibles or contraries; cf Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 5.14.1–2; Cicero *Topica* 13.55.

419 not ... pleasures.] Added in *1522*. Erasmus frequently recalled the nature of the primitive Christian enterprise, contrasting it especially with the use of military power to subdue the world to Christ; cf eg *Paraclesis* 414 with n60, *Julius exclusus* (1518) CWE 27 196, Ep 858:116–19 (1518, dedicatory letter for the second edition of the *Enchiridion*), Ep 916:218–46 (1519, dedicatory letter for the *Paraphrase* on the two Corinthian Epistles), Ep 1381:283–302 (1523, dedicatory letter for the *Paraphrase on Luke*), and notably 572 with n437 just below.

420 The moral gradualism implied here is characteristically Erasmian; cf the discussion of the 'third time period' above, 529–31, also the indexes of CWE 46 and 50 SVV 'gradualism' and 'accommodation.' On prophetic prediction and subsequent fulfilment as an important rational basis for faith see the discussion of the *Paraphrases* on Romans and Luke, 'New Testament Scholarship' 94–5 and 248 with nn382 and 1012.

421 Cf Matt 10:5–15, Mark 6:7–13, Luke 9:1–6 and 10:1–12 (apostolic mission); on the 'limitation' of the message, a feature of the 'second time period,' cf *Ratio* 528 with n200. 'Kingdom of heaven' is a Matthean expression (cf 10:7), in Luke, 'kingdom of God' (cf 10:9). Among the images of theatre, frequent in the *Paraphrases*, that of 'prelude' commonly signifies early anticipations of the full gospel; cf CWE 45 30 n5.

422 Cf 1 Cor 1:26–9. 'Men uneducated': *homines idiotas*; cf 'simple men' (*homines idiotae*) in the paraphrase on Acts 4:2 CWE 50 31. On *idiota* see CWE 39 215 n112 and the reference there to *Supputatio* ASD IX 464:837–465:868.

stubborn persistence and only upon feeling the prints of the nails and of the spear says, 'My Lord and my God' [John 20:28]. Why, even when Christ is about to ascend to heaven, he rebukes them all for their hardness of heart and the difficulty they had in believing what they had seen.[423]

He sprang from the Jews, a most wicked and obstinately rebellious race. He began, not in Nazareth, lest his native city should disparage his authority, but in Capernaum, a city corrupted by wealth and luxury.[424] Openly he censures nothing that had been received on the authority of the community – for there is scarcely anyone who accepts such censure with equanimity. Everywhere he affirms the testimony of the Law, though he gives it a different interpretation.[425] He adapted himself to those he was eager to attract: he became a human being to save human beings; he associated on familiar terms with sinners to restore sinners to health; to entice the Jews he was circumcised, was purified, he observed the sabbath, was baptized, fasted.[426] He prevailed through gentleness, he prevailed through kindness, he prevailed through truth itself, whose power is more effective than any magic charm. Even wild beasts are tamed by such things.

He confirms with the testimony of Scripture almost everything he asserts. Indeed, even when provoked by abuse, he responds either with the Scriptures or with reasoned arguments.[427] For in Matthew, the twelfth chap-

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423 Cf Mark 16:14, where, however, Jesus rebukes the disciples for not believing others who had seen him; cf Luke 24:25.

424 For Nazareth and Capernaum in relation to the beginning of Jesus' ministry see Matt 4:12–17 and Luke 4:16–37. The characterization of cities, especially maritime cities, as wealthy and corrupt is formulaic in Erasmus' writings; cf eg the paraphrase on Acts 18:1 CWE 50 112 with n2, the Argument for the *Paraphrase* on 1 Corinthians CWE 43 19, and the paraphrase on Luke 4:31 CWE 47 153; cf also Matt 11:23 and Luke 10:15 (Capernaum).

425 Cf Matt 5:17–48.

426 Cf Matt 9:10–13, Mark 2:15–17, Luke 5:29–32 (association with sinners); Luke 2:21–4 (circumcision and purification); Luke 4:16 and 31, Mark 1:21 (sabbath); Matt 3:13–4:2, Mark 1:9–13, Luke 3:21–2 and 4:1–2 (baptism and fasting). In his text and translation of Luke 2:22 and in his paraphrase on the text Erasmus follows the preferred reading, which speaks of 'their' purification; and in both paraphrase and annotation (*dies purificationis eius* 'the days of her purification [DV]) he explains in what sense Mary was purified (cf CWE 47 77 with n26), while a *1519* addition to the annotation explains how Christ could be said to be purified.

427 See 'New Testament Scholarship' 11 with nn54–8 and CWE 50 35 n44 for the reference to rhetorical theory that distinguished 'artificial' arguments based on reasonable deduction and 'inartificial arguments,' that is, the primary evidence

ter, when it was said as a terrible insult that he cast out demons with the help of Beelzebub, he replied, 'Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste' [12:25]. And when he was struck at his trial, he said, 'If I have spoken wrongly, give testimony of the wrong; if well, why do you strike me?' [John 18:23]. He provided additional confirmation through miracles, but these themselves were nothing other than kind deeds and[428] on this ground, especially, distinguished from the illusions of magicians. And he made an unquestionable trustworthiness attend every miracle he performed. He did almost everything before a crowd as witness. He sends the lepers to the priests not to be cleansed but that it might be better established that they had been truly cleansed.[429] A man widely known to be blind is healed, his parents are summoned, he himself is called back, and all these actions have only one objective: to build up the trustworthiness of the miracle.[430]

Everywhere he shows that he endures all his sufferings of his own will and with foreknowledge, and that he suffers not on his own account but for us.[431] His teaching won no little confidence from the fact that he never strove for any reward for all his kind deeds – neither glory nor wealth nor pleasure[432] nor sovereign power – so that no suspicion of a ministry corrupted could be duly attached to him. And, lest it should seem that he was seeking some personal gain while alive, the gospel trumpet did not sound throughout the entire world before the heavenly Spirit was sent.[433] Moreover, no witness is more efficacious among mortals than the witness of blood. By his own death and that of his disciples he declared the trustworthiness of his teaching – for

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of testimony. Jesus responds to abuse with Scripture in eg Matt 22:15–46, Mark 12:13–34, Luke 20:20–39 (opponents in the temple); and cf also Jesus' citation of Scripture in the 'temptation' narratives, Matt 4:1–11 and Luke 4:1–13.

428 and ... magicians.] Added in *1522*. For a similar contrast between the illusions of magicians and true miracles see the paraphrases on Acts 8:9–13 and 13:7–12 CWE 50 58–9 and 84–6.

429 In Luke 17:12–14 multiple lepers are sent to the priests and are healed on the way; in Matt 8:1–4, Mark 1:40–4, Luke 5:12–14, a single leper is healed, then sent to the priest 'as a testimony to them' (NRSV).

430 The story is told in John 9; for the details mentioned here see verses 7, 18, and 24.

431 Cf eg Matt 16:21–3, Mark 8:31–3, Luke 9:22 (Jesus predicts his sufferings); John 10:17–18 (Jesus suffers of his own will and for us).

432 pleasure] First in *Schoeffer 1519*; in *Froben 1519*, 'pleasures'

433 Cf Matt 10:5–6 and Acts 1:4–8. But for a different rationale for the pre-Pentecost confinement of the gospel see the paraphrase on Matt 10:5 CWE 45 166–7.

I have already said something about the harmony of his whole life.[434] But about his type of teaching, which generally consists of comparisons drawn from things most familiar to the common folk, and for this reason not only effective but also suited to the capacity of even the uneducated crowd, I shall say something a little later.[435]

It was generally with such forces that Christ, and the apostles after him, assaulted the obstinacy of the Jewish race. In[436] these ways, he who was contemptible in appearance and uneducated overcame the arrogance of the proud philosophy of Greece. By these means he put down the savagery of so many barbarian nations, a savagery unconquered by arms.[437] By these means he brought under the yoke of faith the tyrants and satraps of the whole world, and drew them over to his laws. So declares the prophecy of Isaiah, where Christ is portrayed as one who, for all his gentleness, takes the nations by storm: 'Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my spirit upon him and he shall show judgment to the gentiles. He shall not contend nor cry out, neither shall anyone hear his voice in the streets. The bruised reed he shall not break, and smoking flax he shall not extinguish till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name the gentiles shall hope.'[438] In this passage you do not hear of tortured syllogisms, you do not hear of threats and fulminations, you do not hear of troops armed with the sword, you do not hear of carnage and conflagrations. You hear rather of judgment, you hear of clemency, you hear of gentleness towards the meek, in whom there was some hope of moral progress. You hear of victory – not a victory wrenched out by the force of machines but one sought through judgment. You hear of a victory that is

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434 Cf *Ratio* 546–7. For the 'witness of blood' see eg Gen 4:10; Exod 24:6–8; Matt 23:30–6; John 19:34–6; and 1 John 5:7–8.

435 Cf *Ratio* 632–40 with n745 and *Ratio* 661, where Erasmus comments on various forms of similitudes.

436 In ... uneducated] Added in *1520*; in *1519*, 'He overcame the arrogance' etc. 'Contemptible ... uneducated [*idiota*]': perhaps an allusion to Isa 53:2–3.

437 This paragraph is one of Erasmus' more notable statements condemning the use of armed force to accomplish the mission of the church. The association here of scholastic education (syllogisms), inquisitorial methods, and armed force is striking. For the theme expressed elsewhere see *Ratio* n419.

438 Erasmus cites, with one minor change, the Vulgate of Matt 12:18–21, and the translation here follows DV. In his annotation on Matt 12:18 (*ecce puer meus*) Erasmus observed that in this passage Matthew followed precisely neither the Hebrew nor the Septuagint of Isa 42:1–4.

not fearful for the vanquished, that does not plunder and oppress those who have been subjugated. What then? You are hearing that he is the sort of person on whom the gentiles, vanquished by kindnesses, have fixed their hope of salvation. And yet since these are the means through which the Christian commonwealth arose, grew, and became established, who does not see that these are also the means through which it must be protected and, when it has fallen, rescued, especially by those who claim to stand in the succession of Christ and the apostles.[439]

Now,[440] if you like, let us consider in a brief comparison how the life and teaching of the apostles correspond to the pattern of their teacher. With what great cunning Paul everywhere acts like some chameleon, if I may use the expression, and turns himself into all things to bring some gain to Christ from every side.[441] Thus, on one occasion feeling exalted, he gives himself precedence over all the apostles, on another occasion humbling himself, he says he is unworthy of the name of apostle.[442] On one occasion, when he has returned from the third heaven, he boasts of what he heard there, things forbidden to be told.[443] On another occasion, lowering himself to the humble state of the weak, he professes to know nothing but Jesus and him crucified.[444] At one time, he has wisdom that he speaks among the perfect, whom he feeds with solid food, at another, he feeds[445] the Corinthians with milk,

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439 Compare the comment (*1516*) in the annotation on Acts 1:1 (*primum quidem sermonem*): 'Christians must with all the more zeal seek to learn their origins, inasmuch as once we know the means by which Christianity grew, we might understand that by those same means our fallen religion must be restored' ASD VI-1 178:36–8.

440 Now ... flourishing so widely.] Added in *1520*. For the conclusion of this long section see *Ratio* n476; for its significance as a *1520* addition see 'New Testament Scholarship' 187.

441 Cf 1 Cor 9:19–23. See also the annotation on Rom 1:12 ('to be comforted together'), where, as here, Erasmus notes Paul's characteristic *vafrities* 'cunning.' Just as Alberto Pio had objected to 'Proteus' as an image suited to Christ, so he thought the image of chameleon here was inappropriately applied to Paul; cf CWE 84 300 with n1131 and *Ratio* n351. Paul is described as both 'chameleon' and 'Proteus' in Ep 916:406–47 (the dedicatory letter for the *Paraphrase* on the two Corinthian Epistles). For Paul as 'polyp' see *Ratio* n649.

442 Cf 1 Cor 15:8–11, also 2 Cor 11:5–6, 21–3.

443 Cf 2 Cor 12:2–4.

444 Cf 1 Cor 2:2–3.

445 feeds] In all editions except *1523*, which reads 'nourishes'

as being feeble.[446] Somewhere again, suppliant and unassuming, he flatters those who deserved to be scolded and forgets his own rank while he has regard for their salvation.[447] Elsewhere, on the other hand, how harshly menacing are his words: 'Do you seek a proof of Christ dwelling in me?'[448] He never claims for himself tyrannical power, he everywhere calls the task he performs a ministry – he is nothing but[449] a minister and a steward.[450] And in the third chapter of the First Epistle to Timothy he refers to the bishopric as a 'work': 'One who desires the office of a bishop desires a good work' [3:1]. Paul ascribes to Christ and to God whatever he has done that is worthy of praise.[451] Indeed, he is not reluctant to be the servant of all, provided that the loss of apostolic honour results in Christ's gain.[452] In our day, certain bishops regard their people as purchased slaves or, rather, as cattle; Paul everywhere calls his people either sons or brothers.[453] He represents himself as Philemon's partner, while he calls Onesimus a brother, though he was Philemon's slave – and a fugitive at that.[454]

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446 Cf 1 Cor 2:6, 3:1–3. Cf the paraphrases on 1 Cor 2:3–6 and 3:1–3 CWE 43 43–6 and 51–3 with nn9 and 14, where the ambiguities both of the passages themselves and of Erasmus' understanding of them are discussed.

447 Erasmus continues to allude, it appears, to Paul's relation to the Corinthians; cf eg 1 Cor 1:4–7, 2:1–5, 4:8–13.

448 Cf 2 Cor 13:3, which, however, in Erasmus' text, translation, and in the Vulgate reads, 'You seek a proof of Christ speaking in me.'

449 nothing but] Added in *1523*

450 For the apostles as 'only ministers and stewards' see the paraphrases on Rom 15:19 CWE 42 85–6, on 1 Cor 4:1–2 CWE 43 60–1, and on Acts 20:24 CWE 50 123. 'The task he performs': *functio*, an important word in Erasmus' understanding of ministry, on which see the annotation on Rom 1:5 ('grace and apostleship'), where Erasmus explains his translation of the Greek for 'apostleship' as 'the fulfilment of the apostolic task'; cf also CWE 50 46 n8.

451 Cf the *1535* addition to the annotation on Rom 15:19 ('of wonders in the strength of the Holy Spirit').

452 Cf 1 Cor 9:19.

453 'Brothers' is a common designation throughout the Pauline Epistles. Paul designates certain individuals as 'child' or 'son': Timothy (1 Cor 4:17; 1 Tim 1:2), Titus (Titus 1:4), and Onesimus (Philemon 10); and certain groups as 'children': the Corinthians (2 Cor 6:13), the Galatians (Gal 4:19), and the Thessalonians (1 Thess 2: 7, 11). In all these examples we find the Greek *τέκνον* or *τέκνα* 'child' or 'children.'

454 Philemon 16–17: '... [Onesimus] no longer a slave but ... a beloved brother – especially to me ... if you [Philemon] consider me your partner ...' (NRSV).

Now this affability is particularly effective in making one's way into human hearts. Thus those whose business it is to tame wild beasts first adapt themselves in every way to the nature and disposition of the beasts. So wine slips soothingly into a person's body, and spreading at once through all the veins, it unleashes its force and places the whole person under its power.[455] Accordingly, Paul entices with praise those he wishes to amend. When writing to the Romans who were by nature headstrong, immediately, at the very beginning of the letter he extols their faith,[456] then expatiates on the vices of their former life under a persona that seemed not to be theirs: 'Because when they knew not God, etc,' and then, 'God gave them up to the desires of their heart' [1:21–4]. At length, when they had been softened and soothed, he dares to raise the recollection of their former life: 'What fruit therefore did you have in those things of which you are now ashamed?' [6:21].[457]

By the same design, when he is eager to recall the Athenians from their ingrained superstition, he did not immediately begin with, 'You are out of your minds, Athenians; you worship wicked demons as God.' Rather, he tells them how, as a recent visitor eager to learn, he was walking about intending to survey the rituals and the kind of religion they followed.[458] He calls their wicked idols *σεβάσματα*, an ambiguous word that is appropriate to the representation of God as well as the deities.[459] Moreover, since he knew that the superstition handed down from remote generations of ancestors could not suddenly be eradicated, and that even the state laws forbade anyone to bring

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455 Cf the images of the animal trainer and wine juxtaposed in *Institutio principis christiani* CWE 27 259–60.

456 Cf Rom 1:8.

457 For the general point made here see the annotation on Rom 1:12 ('to be comforted together'). On the other hand, in his annotation on Rom. 1:6 ('in whom are you') Erasmus cites Chrysostom who observed that 'Paul has paid no deference to the Roman masters of the world'; cf CWE 56 29 with n2.

458 Erasmus summarizes Paul's speech to the Athenians recorded in Acts 17:22–31. Cf the paraphrase on these verses (CWE 50 108–11), which abundantly illustrates the principle of accommodation asserted here.

459 On *σεβάσματα* see the annotation on Acts 17:23 (*et videns simulacra vestra*): 'Whereas a word denoting idols would have been offensive, *σεβάσματα* is a word that embraces everything we venerate – altars, shrines, statues, monuments ...' ASD VI-6 286:465–7. In place of the Vulgate's *simulacra* 'idols,' Erasmus from *1519* translated the Greek by *cultura*, an ambiguous word that in classical Latin signified 'culture,' 'cultivation,' 'bestowal of honour,' but in late Latin 'religious worship.'

in foreign religions,[460] he took part of an inscription and with remarkable dexterity turned it to an occasion to preach the gospel.[461] 'I am not bringing in a new religion,' he says. 'Your altars attest that you worship a certain god that is unknown. Worship henceforth as a god you know the one you have worshipped as unknown.' And thereupon he confirms his words not with the testimony of the prophets whose authority would have had little weight among the Athenians, but with that of Aratus, the Greek poet, 'For we too are his offspring.'[462] Then he blames upon the times the fact that the Athenians had until that point been guilty of both impiety and immorality. Finally, he does not immediately call Christ God, but a man, through whom God had determined to restore the world. He affirms that no ordinary proof of this was the fact that God had called this man back to life after he was dead.

With the Galatians, who had fallen away, he is in labour a second time, until Christ should be formed in them,[463] and he counsels the Romans not to reject the weak in faith but to receive such and nourish them until they grow up.[464] Soon, in the fifteenth chapter, he inculcates the same lesson: 'Now we that are stronger ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves' [15:1]. And shortly after, 'Wherefore receive one another, as Christ also has received you to the honour of God' [15:7]. Tolerate those who now are what you once were; tolerate them with the same gentleness with which Christ tolerated and cherished you. Again, in the tenth chapter of the First

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460 Although the introduction of foreign cults into Rome had been forbidden (CWE 50 103 n35), in classical Athens, at least, 'the introduction of a new divinity does not seem to have been illegal.' Plato *Apology of Socrates and Crito* ed Louis Dyer, rev by Thomas Day Seymour (Boston 1908) 16.

461 In his annotation on Acts 17:23 (*ignoto deo*) Erasmus cites Jerome who indicated that the full inscription read, 'To the gods of Asia and Europe and Africa, to unknown and foreign gods,' that it was Paul's cunning (*vafrities*) to select only part of the inscription, and that even in the part excerpted Paul had changed the plural to the singular, ASD VI-6 286:470–4; cf Jerome *Commentarius in epistulam ad Titum 1* (on Titus 1:12); and Joseph A. Fitzmyer SJ *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* Anchor Bible (New York 1998) 607.

462 Erasmus cites the Greek as in Acts 17:28. Aratus (315–240/239 BC) of Soli in Cilicia had been identified by patristic writers as the author of the poem from which this half line was taken, and he is so identified in the paraphrase on Acts 17:28 CWE 50 110. The poem was famous in antiquity and well known in the Renaissance; cf CWE 50 110 n48.

463 Cf Gal 4:19.

464 Cf Rom 14:1 and Eph 4:13–15. The paraphrases on both passages reflect the biblical text in stressing the reponsibility of Christians to 'nourish the weak'; cf CWE 42 77 and CWE 43 331–2.

Epistle to the Corinthians, he bids them be like himself, who with pliancy accommodated himself to all in all ways, 'not seeking,' he says, 'that which is profitable to myself, but to many, that they may be saved' [10:33]. Then, too, with what feeling, with what clemency, he calls back to a better mind the Galatians who had left so deserving an apostle for pseudo-apostles! You would say that this was not an apostle angry at those who had deserved punishment, but a dear mother feeling sick in sympathy with the sickness of her child. He invites them in the sixth chapter to follow the example of this gentleness: 'Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any fault, you who are spiritual instruct such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering yourself, lest you also be tempted' [Galatians 6:1].

But notice, reader, what a large admixture of gentleness is found even in the very severity of Paul. For in the third chapter of the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, he asks that the person who stubbornly refused to obey wholesome admonitions be noted and even shunned.[465] But to what end? That he should perish? By no means, but that he should become ashamed. It is enough for Paul if such a person comes to his senses and repents, if he acknowledges himself, if the sinner is ashamed of himself. What punishment is milder than this? And yet Paul mitigates even this: 'Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother' [3:15]. Moreover, in the fifth chapter of the First Epistle to Timothy he forbids a bishop to reprove somewhat disagreeably an older man taken in a fault, but Paul entreats him to admonish an older man as a father, errant younger men as brothers, old women as mothers, girls as sisters.[466]

But some will say, 'There might be a danger that from this gentleness many people will learn the wrong lessons about many things.' Rather this gentleness has made this world new, as no severity would ever have been able to do. If in ruling a realm clemency is very often more effective than severity, and if many kings have discovered this from experience – among them Jeroboam,[467] the son of Solomon – how much more becoming is clemency among those who are called fathers instead of lords,[468] and to whom the

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465 Cf 2 Thess 3:14–15.

466 Cf I Tim 5:1–2.

467 Jeroboam] Added in *1522*. Erasmus means Rehoboam, Solomon's son and harsh successor, from whom Jeroboam took the northern tribes of the kingdom that had earlier been united by David; cf 1 Kings 12:1–20.

468 For the king as a father figure, ruling through clemency and extending mercy see *Institutio principis christiani* CWE 27 228–30, 256. An allusion to the prince-bishops of the sixteenth century may be intended.

sword has been given not to destroy but to heal?[469] Further, in the third chapter of Titus he asks that even pagans be enticed by this stratagem: 'To speak evil of no one,' he says, 'not to be litigious, but to be gentle, showing all mildness towards all people' [3:2].[470] Here, once again, he assumes the persona of those who have turned from an immoral life to the religion of Christ: 'For,' says he, 'we ourselves also were sometime unwise and incredulous, erring, slaves to diverse desires and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, having hatred for one another' [Titus 3:3]. Paul had never been a person like this, but he represented himself as having been such so that he would give them no offence.

Peter, too, in the fifth chapter of his First Epistle admonishes – or rather entreats – other bishops as partners and associates to prove themselves to be shepherds of the flock entrusted to them, not lords, and to look after the work of Christ, not their own interests.[471] In the second chapter of Acts, in the speech where he, as first, began first to fulfil the apostolic task, he rejects the insult that the disciples were (as it was being said) quite deranged because filled with new wine. Here again, with what gentleness does he do so, citing the witness of the prophet![472] Then he shows by logical argumentation[473] that the oracle of the prophet fits not David but Christ. Even so, to avoid any offence here, he softens his speech, as though enticing them: 'Brethren,' he says, 'let me boldly speak to you' [2:29]. Soon, when they had become troubled in mind, he enjoins upon them nothing else than that they should come to their senses and repent and be made new through baptism. Then, as though imputing their evil deeds to the age, he says, 'Save yourselves

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469 Cf Rom 13:4.

470 That pagans were 'enticed by this strategem' is evidently a deduction from the context of the passage (cf 3:3–8), but that Christian behaviour should win converts from paganism is a well-attested biblical theme; cf eg 1 Pet 2:11–12.

471 Cf 1 Pet 5:2–3.

472 In this passage Erasmus summarizes the narrative of Acts 2:12–40. The 'witness of the prophet' refers ambiguously first to that of Joel cited in Acts 2:17–21, then to that of 'David' cited in 2:25–8, 30–1 and 34–5; for the insult see Acts 2:13. In his paraphrase on this chapter Erasmus draws a portrait of Peter similar to that drawn here: the gentle Peter 'as first [in the apostolic college] began first,' referring both to his position in the apostolic college and to the present occasion; cf CWE 50 17 with n50 and 22 with n89. On the primacy of Peter see further *Ratio* n613.

473 'Logical argumentation' preceded here by 'witness of the prophet' reflects the rhetorical distinction between two types of evidence: witness and argument; cf *Ratio* n427.

from this crooked generation' [2:40]. Then, in the next chapter, see how he extenuates the terrible crime of the Jews, who had killed Christ: 'And now, brethren, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did also your rulers' [3:17]. And he calls them the sons of the prophets, to whom especially Christ was promised.[474] Would you like to hear how much this civility accomplished? The number of believers had already grown to five thousand![475] We, for our part, deaf to this teaching, blind to these examples, do nothing else than threaten and terrify; we do not teach, we compel, we do not lead, we drag – our point of reference in all these matters being our own glory and our own purse. We more readily cause a loss for Christ, however great, than we would allow the diminution of our own emoluments even by the merest fraction. Do you wish to know the result? You see how the borders of the religion of Christ have been contracted, a religion once flourishing so widely.[476] But I have frequently discussed these matters elsewhere;[477] now let us pursue[478] what we began.

We must also notice in what ways and how carefully he prepares those who are about to go out to preach the gospel. Our observation will enable those who today undertake the ministry of preaching Christ to understand the preparation they ought to acquire. The kingdom of heaven is being summoned;[479] it is fitting that from this heavenly kingdom the earthly passions that hold sway in those who love the world be far removed. It is

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474 Cf Acts 3:25.

475 Cf Acts 4:4. Cf the *civilitas* 'civility' ascribed to Paul in the annotations on Romans, eg on 5:1 ('let us have peace in regard to God') and on 15:26 ('a collection').

476 A reference to the Islamic conquests: Constantinople had fallen in 1453, and in 1516 and 1517 the Turkish king Selim I had conquered Syria and Egypt, and had begun to move against Europe; cf Epp 729:56–8 and 1183:14–16. In August 1521 Belgrade fell to the Turks under Suleiman the Magnificent; cf Ep 1228:60–1. In *De bello Turcico* Erasmus describes the extent of Turkish rule; cf CWE 64 229. In a 1523 addition to the famous adage *Dulce bellum inexpertis* (*Adagia* IV i 1) Erasmus, discussing the Turkish menace, wrote, 'What a small corner of the world is left to us!' CWE 35 433. For Erasmus on the Turkish threat see *Ratio* n690. See also the colloquy 'A Fish Diet' (1526) CWE 40 686:18–24, where Erasmus draws a map of the small portion of the world that remained Christian. The long addition of 1520 concludes at this point; cf *Ratio* n440.

477 Cf eg Ep 858:85–165 (preface to the 1518 edition of the *Enchiridion*).

478 let us pursue] First in *1520*; in *1519*, 'we shall follow'

479 Cf Matt 10:7; in Luke 9:2 the Twelve, and in Luke 10:9 the Seventy, are sent to preach the kingdom of God. Cf *Ratio* 621 with n687, where Erasmus sees in the life of Christ a model for the preparation of the preacher.

worthwhile to consider with what great zeal he banished all such passions from the hearts of his disciples. He took away luxury and the love of sensual pleasures with the parable of the rich reveller and the beggar Lazarus.[480] These come before our eyes, the one dragged down from temporary delights to everlasting torments in the realms of Tartarus,[481] the other carried from the evils of this life to eternal rest. He takes away the pursuit of riches with the parable of the rich man who was enlarging his barns and promising himself a soft and pleasant life for many years, but on that very night death loomed up behind the wretched fellow, ready to take away once and for all what he had heaped up with the sweat of so many years.[482] Again, he removes the pursuit of wealth when he prohibits us from being concerned about tomorrow; when he asks that treasures, subject to neither moths nor thieves, be laid up eternal in the heavens;[483] when he enjoins us to live from day to day, like lilies and little sparrows, relying on the goodness and the providential care of the heavenly Father;[484] when in the tenth chapter of Mark, through the opportunity offered by the young man who had departed in sorrow as soon as he was told to abandon his wealth (for he was very rich), Jesus turned to his disciples and said that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.[485] To convince his disciples of this from experience also, he sharply reminds them, when they are concerned about bread, of that miracle[486] which they had seen a little before: with a few loaves and fishes several thousands had been filled and so abundantly satisfied that many baskets full of leftovers were taken up

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480 Cf Luke 16:19–31.

481 Cf 2 Pet 2:4; 'Tartarus' as in the Vulgate of 2 Pet 2:4, reflecting the Greek *ταρταρώσας*; for the topography of Tartarus in the context of an exposition of the Lukan passage see *In psalmum 85* CWE 64 82–6.

482 Cf Luke 12:16–21.

483 in the heavens] Added in *1522*

484 Cf Matt 6:34 (concern for tomorrow); Luke 12:33 and Matt 6:19–20 (treasures); and for the expression 'laid up eternal in the heavens' see 2 Cor 5:1 and 1 Pet 1:4. Cf Matt 6:25–33 and Luke 12:22–31, where the texts speak of lilies and, respectively, of birds and ravens; for sparrows see Matt 10:29–31 (where Erasmus, in his own translation, prefers 'little sparrows' to the Vulgate's 'sparrows') and Luke 12:6–7.

485 Cf Mark 10:17–25; camel and rich man are compared in Mark 10:25, which, however, speaks of the kingdom of God; cf n479 above.

486 miracle] Added in *1522*

from the feast.[487] In addition, there is the time when he sends the disciples on their first preaching mission, carrying no provisions; on their return they confessed that they had lacked nothing.[488]

In many ways he roots out the affection one has for parents and kin (for affection also is frequently accustomed to call us aside from our zeal for godliness). He asks that they depend wholly on the heavenly Father and call no one on earth 'father';[489] likewise, he says that he does not acknowledge as a disciple one who will not renounce father and mother, sisters and brothers, and, lastly, even also his wife, when the work of the kingdom of God requires it.[490] Though he had a mother of unexcelled piety, he himself is never fondly gentle with her. When she appeals to him in the matter of the wine, he says, 'O woman, what have you to do with me?' [John 2:4]. When he is scolded in the temple, he says, 'How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?' [Luke 2:49].[491] Again, in Matthew, the twelfth chapter, while [Jesus was] teaching the crowd, someone interrupted him on behalf of his mother and brothers, who wanted to meet with him. What an absence of fond affection in his response! 'Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?' [12:48]. Again, on the cross, he calls her 'woman,' not 'mother,' placing John in his own position.[492]

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487 Cf Matt 16:5–12, Mark 8:14–21 (concern about bread); Matt 14:15–21, Mark 6:34–44, Luke 9:12–17, also Matt 15:32–8, Mark 8:1–10 (miracle of the loaves and fishes).

488 For the mission see Matt 10:5–15; Mark 6:7–13; Luke 9:1–6, 10:1–12. Luke alone of the synoptic writers reports the disciples' response on their return from their mission, but the confession to which Erasmus refers here is found in Luke 22:35. For the return of the 'seventy-two' see Luke 10:17–20.

489 Cf Matt 23:9.

490 Cf Matt 10:37 and especially Luke 14:26–7 where the wife is included. 'Renunciation' is explicitly demanded only in the general statement of Luke 14:33, while the qualification of the final clause seems to be without warrant in the biblical texts.

491 Modern translations generally render the Greek in the last clause as 'I must be in my Father's house' (NEB, NRSV), but earlier Bibles translated, 'I must be about my Father's business' (DV, AV). Erasmus here cites the Latin of the Vulgate and his own translation, following the Greek, literally, 'be in the things of my Father'; in his paraphrase on the verse he interprets the expression clearly as 'be about my Father's business.'

492 Ie his own position as son; cf John 19:26–7. Erasmus comments elsewhere on Jesus' treatment of his mother, as in the annotation on Luke 2:50 (*et ipsi non intellexerunt verbum*): 'One must also observe what an absence of fond affection there is in the boy's response ... Christ wanted his own work, which derived

Now in regard to the love of honour and the disease of ambition, which is usually innate in noble and lofty natures, in how many ways does he root this out of the hearts of the disciples, knowing full well that this would be the chief bane of ecclesiastical princes.[493] He allowed his disciples to feel this emotion so that he could more effectively eradicate it. It was from ambition that the sons of Zebedee request (through their mother, whom they had secretly directed to this end) that they sit next to Christ in the kingdom of heaven.[494] It was from ambition that the disciples disputed among themselves who would be first[495] in the kingdom of heaven. Accordingly, they hear from the Lord: 'The princes of the gentiles lord it over them, and those who have power, exercise it over their own. It shall not be so among you; rather, whoever will be greater among you, let him be your minister, and he that will be first among you shall be your servant' [Matthew 20:25–7]. And not content with this, he offers himself as an example: 'Even as the Son of Man did not come to be ministered unto, but that he himself[496] might minister to others and give his life for many' [Matthew 20:28]. How little[497] is this speech con-

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entirely from heaven, to be free from all human affection ... 'ASD VI-5 490:196–7, 214–15; similarly, the annotation on Matt 12:48 (*quaerentes te*): 'From this we can gather that whenever we are dealing with affairs of church or state, the natural feeling for physical kin ... should have no place' ASD VI-5 219:649–220:653. Cf the paraphrase on John 2:4 CWE 46 38–9. But the paraphrase on this verse in John, as well as Erasmus' comments in these annotations, seemed to many to detract from the high status accorded Mary and were widely criticized; cf *Supputatio* ASD IX-5 442:315–22 (Béda's censures) and 443:324–450:519 (Erasmus' response), *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1085C–E, and *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* CWE 82 237; also CWE 84 246–53, where Erasmus' annotation on Matt 12:48 is discussed in relation to Pio's criticisms.

493 Cf Ep 858:180–1 and 374–5 (to Paul Volz): 'The princes of the church are exposed as a rule to two plagues in particular, avarice and ambition.' Cf the paraphrase on Matt 20:24: Jesus wanted to remove utterly ambition and envy from the 'hearts of all who would accede to the duties of the apostles,' CWE 45 287. See also *Enchiridion* 'Against Ambition' CWE 66 121–2 and for 'the first case of ambition in the church' the paraphrase on Acts 6:1 CWE 50 46. On the affections as diseases see *Ratio* 491 with n15.

494 Cf Matt 20:20–3. In the Markan parallel James and John make the request directly, and the mother does not appear; cf Mark 10:35–40.

495 first] First in *1520*; previously, 'chief'

496 himself] Added in *1520*

497 How little] In *1519* and in *Froben* March *1520* 'Popes, how little,' thus making a direct address to the popes. 'Popes' was omitted in the February 1520 edition and in the later editions of 1522 and 1523.

cordant with a disposition towards ambition! He sets before them a lowly and insignificant child and says that no one will enter the kingdom of heaven who does not humble himself to the level of a little child.[498]

Again, in the twenty-third chapter of Matthew he openly attacked the pride and ambition of the scribes and Pharisees: making a display of themselves with their phylacteries broadened and their fringes extended, they strove to get the first seats at dinners and the first rows in the synagogues, and were delighted to be greeted in the market place with 'Rabbi' as a mark of honour.[499] 'But you,' he says, 'be not called Rabbi, for one is your master, and all you are brothers. And call none your father upon earth, for one is your father, who is in heaven. Nor be called masters, for one is your master, Christ. He that is the greater of you shall be your servant. Moreover, whoever will extol himself shall be humbled, and he that humbles himself shall be exalted' [23:8–12]. He makes the same point in the fourteenth chapter of Luke with the parable of the guests. Among these, the one who had chosen the last place is told to go up higher.[500] His invitation to the lowly to accept his soft and gentle yoke has the same import: 'Learn from me,' he says, 'for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls' [Matthew 11:29].[501] Pride is a quality conducive to unrest, it strives for the position of honour, it is vengeful, and in never yielding to anyone it is never free from fighting. And yet no teaching is more effective than Christ's own life. For what puny little man would not be ashamed haughtily to extol himself, when he who is truly the highest girds himself with a towel and washes the feet of his disciples.[502] He is taken, he is beaten, he suffers insults and is lifted up on a cross as though he were a shameful criminal. Finally, by[503] casting

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498 Erasmus appears to follow the Matthean version of the story of the ambition of James and John (Matt 20:20–8) with its parallel in Mark 10:35–45, attaching to it, however, the story about the child as told in Matt 18:1–5 with its parallel in Mark 9:33–7 and Luke 9:46–8.

499 Cf Matt 23:5–7.

500 Cf Luke 14:7–11.

501 Erasmus omits Matt 11:30, '… for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.' 'Soft and gentle' represents the Greek *χρηστός* 'easy' (AV, NRSV), 'sweet' (DV, for the Vulgate *suave*); cf the brief *1516* comment that introduced the annotation on the verse (*iugum meum suave*).

502 Cf John 13:3–12.

503 by ... point] *per summam diiectionem sui* in all editions except *1522*, where *dilectionem* 'love' is read for *diiectionem*, probably by mistake, since it does not properly construe in this context.

himself down to the farthest point, he merited being raised to a position of highest honour.[504]

Furthermore, many, many people are puffed up with the nobility of their race. This disease, though it is indeed common to all, nevertheless infected more especially the Jews, who were boasting incessantly of their father Abraham. [John the Baptist] says, 'Do not begin to say, "We are children of Abraham," for I say unto you that God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham.'[505] And elsewhere [Jesus] calls all those 'children of Abraham' who resembled Abraham by their deeds, while he says that those who were boasting that they were children of Abraham were children of the devil – the parent they emulated by their wicked deeds.[506] Every kind of nobility among Christians must be judged by virtuous action, not by family trees. The person who is a slave to vices is the only one whose status is a matter of disgrace. Christ gives a centurion – a foreigner – precedence to Israelites.[507] He prefers a Samaritan leper to Jews. Again it is the Samaritan who cared for the wounded traveller that he prefers to the priest and the Levite, who used to despise the Samaritans as the vilest of people, while they themselves behaved as demigods.[508]

He banishes utterly the evil of rage, inviting us with so many parables to be clement and ready to forgive. So it is, in Matthew, the eighteenth chapter, with the parable of the slave who would not pardon a fellow slave, though he himself had experienced the mercy of their common master. In that same chapter Jesus bids us to correct the erring brother in private and without witnesses, and if a brother comes to his senses and repents seventy

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504 Cf Phil 2:5–11, an important biblical text in Erasmus' debate with Lefèvre; cf *Apologia ad Fabrum* CWE 83 33 n122 and 36–7, which amplifies the brief statement here.

505 See Luke 3:8 (with its synoptic parallel, Matt 3:9) and John 8:33 for the expression 'We are children of Abraham.'

506 Cf John 8:39–44. Kinship defined in terms of spiritual and moral likeness is a commonplace to which Erasmus frequently appealed; cf *Adagia* IV iii 36 and the paraphrase on John 8:37–44 CWE 46 115–17, especially 115 nn60, 61; and for further examples see CWE 43 338 with n1, CWE 48 139 with n24, and CWE 50 49n6. For the commonplace in Erasmus' letters see Epp 2093:42–9 (to Karel Uutenhove) and 2432:21–9 (to John More).

507 Israelites.] First in *1522*; previously, 'Jews.' For the story see Matt 8:5–13 and Luke 7:2–10.

508 Cf Luke 17:11–19 (Samaritan leper); Luke 10:29–37 (the 'good Samaritan'). For the contempt of Jews for Samaritans see John 4:7–9; and for its biblical rationale in the religious defection of the Samaritans see 2 Kings 17.

times seven times, he bids us to forgive him as many times.[509] So also is it in the ninth chapter of Luke: as the Samaritans do not receive Christ, James and John say, 'Lord, do you want us to bid fire to come down from heaven to consume them?' [9:54]; but Christ at once summons them back from this fierce impulse[510] to a disposition towards clemency, and sharply rebuking them, says, 'You do not know of what spirit you are. The Son of Man came not to destroy souls but to save' [9:55–6].[511]

There is also another affection that lies in wait even for good men in the very midst of their good deeds, if they are not careful: trust in ourselves.[512] Christ does not tolerate this disposition in his disciples. One who thinks he is godly is not godly enough. Christ scorns the Pharisee who was standing by proclaiming his merits; he acknowledges the publican who was standing far off, displeased with himself.[513] Likewise in Luke, the seventeenth chapter, he draws a picture for the sake of comparison, then explains that no thanks

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509 Cf Matt 18:23–35 (unforgiving slave), 18:15–17 (erring brother), 18:21–2 (forgiveness seventy times seven).

510 fierce impulse] First in *1520*; previously, 'affection'

511 These verses from Luke, though included in older translations (DV and AV), are found in the footnotes of modern translations (NEB and RSV) as probably an addition to the text. They are included in the translations of both Erasmus and the Vulgate of the 1527 edition of the New Testament, though in his annotation on Luke 9:56 (*non venit animas perdere, sed servare*) Erasmus observes (*1519*) that 9:56 is not found in Theophylact and thinks (*1527*) it might have been either carelessly omitted or added from Matt 18:11 (where also it is a doubtful reading). Luke 9:55–6 are cited only as a variant in Weber 1627 55n.

512 'Trust in ourselves': *fiducia nostri*, which may also be rendered by 'self-confidence.' In Erasmus' theological vocabulary the word characteristically invites, as here, a contrast between reliance upon merits achieved by our own works and reliance upon the freely given grace of God for salvation; cf CWE 42 xxxvii, CWE 44 243 n1. Erasmus notes the connotation of the word in his classic definition of *fides* in the *1527* annotation on Rom 1:17 ('from faith to faith'); and cf the correspondence with Ambrosius Pelargus in 1532: 'In my opinion *fides* sometimes means *fiducia*,' Allen Ep 2675:15. Here the expression echoes the biblical words that introduce the parable of the 'Pharisee and the publican,' which Erasmus immediately recalls: Jesus spoke to those *qui in se confidebant* 'who were trusting in themselves' (Luke 18:9, as in both the Vulgate and Erasmus' New Testament). Cf *Ratio* n565.

513 Cf Luke 18:9–14. The spatial indicators here, 'standing close by ... far off,' are amplified in the paraphrase on Luke 18:11–13: 'The Pharisee, standing next to the mercy seat, as if he deserved to speak with God at close quarters, prayed … the tax collector, entirely dissatisfied with himself … stood far away from the sacred objects …' CWE 48 118–19. For dissatisfaction with oneself as a prerequisite

is owed to servants even if they have in every respect fulfilled their duty. He says, 'So you also, when you have done all that is commanded you, say, "We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we ought to do"' [Luke 17:10].[514] He makes the same point in the next chapter with the parable of the talents entrusted by a proprietor: the principal belongs to someone else, however small it is; whatever is acquired through our effort is acquired for the Lord, not for us.[515] Stewardship has been entrusted to us; woe betide us if we are remiss, but there is no reason to boast on our own account if we manage affairs dutifully. What we read in Matthew, the nineteenth chapter, has the same end in view. When a certain man asks him what good he had to do to have eternal life, he says, 'Why do you ask me concerning the good? One is good, God' [19:17].[516] Christ perceived the sickness of a man who was arrogating to himself the praise for his goodness, when all of our righteous acts are nothing else in the eyes of God than the rags of a woman that are soaked in her menstrual flow.[517] Besides, in the same Gospel, the twenty-fifth chapter, he acknowledges only those who are themselves unaware of their own good deeds: 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and fed you, thirsty and gave you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and took you in? Or naked and clothed you? Or when did we see you sick or in prison and came to you?' [25:37–9]. It is a most certain proof of true piety if, when you have with all your strength made every effort, you think yourself devoid of piety.

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to conversion see the paraphrase on Mark 1:4 (CWE 49 16–17); and for its place in the 'three stages' of repentance, CWE 44 13 n5 and the annotation on 2 Cor 7:10 (*stabilem*) ASD VI-8 400:245–51 with 248–51n.

514 For the 'picture drawn for the sake of comparison' (*similitudo*) see Luke 17:7–8. For a similar juxtaposition of the parable of the Pharisee and the publican with the similitude narrated here see Ep 858:616–22 (14 August 1518). Alberto Pio disliked Erasmus' interpretation here of Luke 17:10; cf CWE 84 346 n1392.

515 Cf Luke 19:11–27 – not the 'next' (*proximo*) chapter, 18, as Erasmus implies. In Luke the parable speaks of *minae* 'pounds' (RSV for Greek *mnai 'minae'*), in the Matthean parallel (25:14–30) of 'talents' (Greek *talanta*). The sentence that follows echoes 1 Cor 9:15–17.

516 Erasmus cites from the Vulgate, which represents the preferred text (as in DV and NRSV). His own text read, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good except God' (so AV), though in his annotation on Matt 19:17 (*quid me interrogas de bono*), he questioned this reading of his Greek text.

517 Cf Isa 64:6 (VG). The verse was 'a traditional scriptural witness, handed down in *catenae*, to the worthlessness of our own righteousness'; Robert D. Sider 'The Just and the Holy in Erasmus' New Testament Scholarship' ERSY 11 (1991) 11. Cf *Ratio* n535.

The unjust are surprised if they have neglected some duty – so far are they from thinking themselves ungodly.[518] In Matthew, the seventh chapter, he acknowledges not even those who recall that they have even cast out demons through his name, that they have predicted the future and have done many wonderful things. He says, 'Truly, I say to you, I do not know you' [7:23].[519]

The parable he puts before us in Luke, the twelfth chapter, invites the same conclusion, if I am not mistaken. Here, he warns us that no one, confident in his own justice, should appeal to a judge and risk the full rigour of the law, but ought rather to settle the quarrel with his adversary.[520] He makes the same point in the fifteenth chapter of John when he says, 'You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and appointed you, that you should go and bring forth fruit' [15:16]. And a bit before in the same chapter he calls himself the vine, the disciples the branches.[521] If we bring forth any good fruit, everything must be credited to the stock; without the stock we are nothing but fuel for the fire.[522] Then in the next chapter the disciples are a little pleased with themselves when they say, 'Now we know that you know all things and do not need anyone to question you. By this we believe that you have proceeded from God' [John 16:30]. But how quickly does he thrust them back and does not allow them to remain in that disposition: 'Now,' he says, 'you believe;[523] behold, the hour will come, and indeed has come, when you will desert me and scatter in all directions' [John 16:31–2]. Nor did he suffer Peter when

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518 Cf Matt 25:41–4. For Pio's criticism see CWE 84 346 n1394. Cf the eulogy of William Warham in the annotation on 1 Thess 2:7 (*sed facti summus parvuli*): '[A man] you would judge to be in every respect extraordinary and unexcelled, yet in no other respect does he seem greater than that he alone does not recognize his greatness' ASD VI-9 398:125–8; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' n309.

519 Cf Matt 7:21–4, but in the citation Erasmus here conflates Matt 7:23 with Matt 25:12.

520 Cf Luke 12:57–8; Matt 5:25. The interpretation of these passages as an admonition against trust in one's righteousness contrasts with the interpretation given in the paraphrases: in Matthew an admonition to peace and concord, in Luke an admonition against losing time as one hastens to gospel perfection; cf CWE 45 101 and CWE 48 45.

521 Cf John 15:5.

522 Cf John 15:6.

523 'Now … you believe': A statement, as in ER (all editions) and the *1527* Vulgate, but in most Bibles a question, as in the *Gloss* (Froben-Petri), the Clementine Vulgate, DV, AV, and RSV. Curiously, Erasmus appears to have paraphrased the sentence as a question, calling attention, as here, to the vice of self-confidence, CWE 46 191.

with human self-confidence he was making magnificent promises in regard to himself: 'Even though all should be offended, I, at least, will not waver.'[524] Jesus replied, 'Truly, I say to you that this night, before the cock crows twice, you will deny me thrice' [Mark 14:30]. Elsewhere, when the disciples were relating somewhat boastfully how successful they had been in their first attempt at preaching (for even the demons had been subject to them), he says, 'Truly, I say to you, I saw Lucifer falling as lightning from heaven. Do not boast about the fact that the spirits are subject to you; boast rather that your names are written in heaven.'[525] And it was not Peter alone who declared that he would be steadfast; his word was everyone's word. Nor was he alone in losing his self-confidence; the others also fled in terror.[526]

This,[527] too, is generally ingrained in human nature, that everyone has a high opinion of himself but a rather low opinion of others, a vice present more in beginners and those who are only a little advanced[528] than in the well-practised and the fully trained. Hence those who within a year have received the title and the profession of the seven liberal arts are proverbially reckoned among the 'wild beasts.'[529] It was aptly and wisely said by someone that those who had gone off to Athens became, first, wise men, then, philosophers (that is, those who are eager for wisdom), finally, ignorant and

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524 A free rendering of Mark 14:29 and Matt 26:33

525 Luke 10:18 and 20, freely rendered

526 Cf Matt 26:35, 56; Mark 14:31, 50.

527 This ... upon the divine help.] This paragraph and the following four were added in *1520*.

528 are only a little advanced] First in *1522*; in *1520*, 'have only just begun'

529 The statement may reflect a popular jibe at those who had recently received the degree of master of arts and had thus become entitled to teach in a university. The seven liberal arts – the trivium (grammar, logic and rhetoric) and quadrivium (arithmetic, music, geometry, astronomy) – provided the traditional basis for an arts degree, though modifications might have reduced their clarity of outline in the curriculum. At both Paris and Oxford the faculty of arts was called the 'Faculty of the Seven Liberal Arts.' See Craig R. Thompson 'Universities in Tudor England' *Tudor and Stuart England* 45–9; and James A. Weisheiple 'The Place of the Liberal Arts in the University Curriculum During the XIV and XV Centuries' in *Arts libéraux et philosophie au moyen âge.* Actes du quatrième congrès international de philosophie médiévale (Montreal and Paris 1969) 209–13.

uneducated folk, because it was found that only when they had advanced as far as possible did they realize that they knew nothing.[530]

Accordingly, Paul, who had drunk deeply enough of the Spirit of Christ, everywhere with remarkable solicitude deters us from this disease that makes us not only untaught but unteachable. Everywhere he calls any virtue we have 'the gift of God' and 'grace,' and attributes it to Christ and to the Spirit of Christ. Thus, in the second chapter to the Ephesians he says, 'By grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God, not of works, that no one may boast' [2:8–9]. Again, in the tenth chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians he says, 'He who boasts, let him boast in the Lord' [10:17]. What is meant by this expression, 'to boast in the Lord?' Surely that every virtuous act of ours be ascribed to the freely given kindness of Christ. But he speaks even more clearly in the third chapter of the same Epistle: 'And such confidence we have through Christ towards God. Not that we are sufficient to think anything of ourselves, as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God' [3:4–5].[531]

Moreover, in the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans he shows that salvation comes to us only through the righteousness that is from faith. Furthermore, what he calls the 'righteousness from faith' is this: when we attribute absolutely nothing to our own deeds but acknowledge that whatever success we have as we try for the best with all our might, is the result of his gift freely given.[532] Elsewhere, he calls this the righteousness of God, to which he opposes the righteousness of human beings. He says, 'Wishing to

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530 For a similar statement attributed to Menedemus, a Greek philosopher (fl 300 BC) from Eretria in Euboea, see *Parabolae* CWE 23 187:3–7. Cf also Socrates' story in Plato *Apology* 20C–22E. With the familiar definition given here of a philosopher as one eager for wisdom (from the Greek *philos* 'loving of' and *sophia* 'wisdom') compare that of Cicero in *Tusculan Disputations* 5.3.9.

531 Erasmus attempts to offer a systematic analysis of the doctrine of grace in *De libero arbitrio* CWE 76 27–33.

532 For the expression 'righteousness from faith' (*iustitia ex fide*) see Rom 9:30 and 10:6; for the expression 'righteousness of faith' (*iustitia fidei*), Rom 4:13. In his translation Erasmus, following the Vulgate, regularly rendered the Greek *δικαιοσύνη* by *iustitia* 'justice,' and the forms of the Greek verb *δικαιόω* he commonly translated by *justificare* 'to make just.' English translations generally (DV excepted) have translated the Greek noun by 'righteousness' (*The Wycliffe New Testament (1388)* ed W.R. Cooper [London 2002] 258–9 'rightwiseness') but have translated the verb by 'to justify.' I have adopted the common English practice, except when quoting DV, though it seems clear from the *Paraphrases* that for Erasmus the Latin *iustitia* conveyed an inherent forensic metaphor not easily

establish their own righteousness, they have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God' [Romans 10:3]. For he writes thus in the third chapter: '[…] even the justice of God by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe in him, for there is no distinction, for all have sinned and do need the glory of God. Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath proposed to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to the showing of his justice for the remission of former sins, through the forbearance of God, for the showing of his justice in this time, that he himself may be just and the justifier of him who is of the faith of Jesus Christ' [3:22–6].[533] What he writes in the fifth chapter agrees with this: 'For if by one man's offence death reigned through one, much more they who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life' [5:17].[534] You see how everywhere he calls our righteousness 'grace' and 'gift.' But what has he added? – 'through one Jesus Christ' [5:17]. And yet in this whole Epistle does Paul aim at anything else than to take away the self-confidence of Jews and Gentiles alike, and to invite them to the help offered by Christ, placing no trust whatever in themselves? Our righteous deeds are nothing but a rag polluted with menstrual flow; our wisdom is folly; our purity impure.[535] But[536] Christ is all these things to us: justice and peace and wisdom.[537] This he is as a result of the generosity of the Father, who first both freely loved us and freely bestowed upon us even this, that we should love him in return.[538]

It is in line with this that Paul everywhere calls himself a slave of Jesus Christ.[539] Whatever the slave does in the course of his duty is attributed to

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discerned in the English 'righteousness.' For Erasmus' essentially medieval conception of 'righteousness' see CWE 44 xvii n40; cf also CWE 43 38 n41, 381 n22, and CWE 48 242 n45.

533 Erasmus cites the Vulgate, rendered here as in DV.

534 Erasmus corrects the Vulgate 'and of the gift and of righteousness' to read 'and of the gift of righteousness.' See the annotation on Rom 5:17 ('receiving the abundance of grace and of the gift and of righteousness').

535 For the image of the polluted rag see *Ratio* 586 with n517 above. 'Our righteous deeds' (RSV) translates *iustitiae nostrae* 'our justices' in the Latin Vulgate of Isa 64:6. For wisdom as folly see 1 Cor 3:19.

536 But] Latin *at* in *1520* and *1523*; in *1522*, *ad* is read – probably by mistake.

537 Cf 1 Cor 1:30 and Eph 2:14.

538 Cf 1 John 4:7–12 and 19, also John 3:16.

539 Cf Rom 1:1; Gal 1:10; and Phil 1:1; but also 1 Cor 4:1 and Titus 1:1. *Servus* is both 'slave' and 'servant'; the context here invites the less ambiguous image of 'slave.' Cf *Ratio* 659–60 with n900.

his master on whose order he acts. If he is remiss, he deserves punishment; if he completes the tasks assigned, no reward is owed him under contract, since he belongs wholly to his master.[540] The same point is made when Paul designates the task he performs at one time a stewardship, at another a ministry.[541] Trustworthy though your management may be, still, what you manage belongs to another; diligent though your administration may be, you administer the Lord's affairs. Indeed, writing to the Romans, he designates as 'grace' the very fact that he had been called to the apostolic ministry: 'By whom,' he says, 'we have received grace and apostleship' [1:5]; dealing with the Corinthians, he calls it 'mercy': 'Concerning virgins,' he says, 'I have no commandment of the Lord, but I give counsel as having obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful' [1 Corinthians 7:25].

Therefore, Paul is eager to root completely out of our souls this disposition, a disposition particularly harmful and destructive. Accordingly, in writing to the Romans he recalls the parable of the Master, about the vine and the branches, with a comparison – the image of the olive tree and the wild olive grafted into it.[542] It was of no benefit to the Jews to be the original branches; they were cut off because of their unbelief. It will be of no value whatever to us to have been grafted into the olive tree and made partakers of its root if we practise the things for which we deserve to be cut off. He says, 'The branches were broken off that I might be grafted in. True; because of unbelief they were broken off. But you stand by faith; be not arrogant, but fear' [Romans 11:19–20]. And soon, 'I would not have you ignorant, brothers, of the mystery, lest you should be wise in your own conceits' [Romans 11:25]. What is this 'be wise in your own conceits'? Quite simply, 'trusting in yourselves.'[543] Nor is there, in truth, a danger that if we should lay aside our confidence in our own strength, we might be more slack in our effort to

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540 Cf Luke 17:7–10; and *Ratio* 585–6 with n514.

541 In the Vulgate (as in ER) Paul frequently designates his work as a *ministerium* 'ministry,' himself as a *minister* 'minister'; cf eg Acts 20:24, 2 Cor 5:18, 1 Tim 1:12 (ministry); Rom 15:16, Eph 3:7, Col 1:23, 25 (minister). Less frequently do we find *dispensatio* 'stewardship' and *dispensator* 'steward'; but cf 1 Cor 4:1, 2. 'The task he performs' renders *functionem*; cf *Ratio* n450, also 660 with n901.

542 Cf John 15:1–6 (parable of the vine and the branches; already cited *Ratio* n521); Rom 11:17–24 (image of olive and wild olive). 'Master': *magistri*, common in VG and ER for *διδάσκαλος* 'teacher,' but unusual in the *Ratio* as a designation of Christ.

543 Elsewhere Erasmus refers the expression to the arrogance of gentiles who indulge in self-satisfaction in the place they have received in saving-history; cf the paraphrase on Rom 11:17–24 CWE 42 65–7 and *De libero arbitrio* CWE 76 53–4.

reach the summit of virtue. Rather, since we are convinced that everything is possible with the assistance of God, and that no one lacks God's help except the one who refuses it, so much the more keenly will we enter upon this racecourse, awaiting from him the beginning of the course, its progress, and a successful conclusion.[544] No one trusts God more truly than one who entirely distrusts his own resources. No one has more strength than one who relies entirely upon the divine help.

In addition to this, there is a strange power in the human sense of shame, which often those cannot disregard who can disregard wealth and pleasures. Accordingly, Christ pronounces people blessed when others reproach them, bringing disgrace upon them with false slanders.[545] He adds an example from his own experience: 'If,' says he, 'they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more those of his household? The disciple is not above his master' [Matthew 10:25, 24]. And in Acts the apostles think it is to their honour that they were publicly beaten with whips, for God had thought them worthy to suffer dishonour for the name of Christ.[546] Elsewhere he promises a reciprocation of behaviour: 'Whoever will be ashamed of me before men, of him shall I also be ashamed before my Father, and the one who confesses me before men, I shall in turn acknowledge before the Father.'[547] Paul does not boast about other things, only about the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, though the world considers the cross to be the greatest disgrace.[548] Paul also knows how to carry on the gospel through good report and bad, in such a way that if any glory came of it, he transferred the glory to Christ; if any ignominy, he considered it an honour to be slandered because of Christ.[549]

A final disposition would remain so deeply implanted in us by nature that it could seem unassailable, if all things were not possible with

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544 Evidently an allusion to the three aspects of 'particular grace': the first stirring up, the second continuing, the third bringing to completion; cf *De libero arbitrio* CWE 76 32. 'Racecourse': *stadium* as in 1 Cor 9:24 (ER and VG); cf also Heb 12:1–2.

545 Cf Matt 5:11.

546 Cf Acts 5:40–1.

547 Erasmus brings together dominical sayings from two contexts, Mark 8:38 (cf Luke 9:26) and Matt 10:32–3 (cf Luke 12:8–9).

548 Cf Gal 6:14; 1 Cor 1:18–24; and Heb 12:2.

549 For Paul's ministry through good report and bad see 2 Cor 6:3–4 and 8; for his reaction to slanders, 2 Cor 12:10; Phil 1:17–18. Paul's boasting is a recurrent theme in his Epistles; cf eg Rom 15:17 and especially 2 Cor 10:13–15, 11:10. For Paul's modesty see especially the annotation on Rom 15:19 ('of wonders in the strength of the Holy Spirit') and Ep 260:11–16 to John Colet (29 April 1512).

God.[550] For who, through human resources, would make light of the fear of facing trial on a capital charge, disdain the cruelty of tyrants, the most savage punishments, lastly, death, too, and one that appears ignominious in human eyes? In respect to this also, Christ bids his disciples to be without concern, enjoining them not to think of a speech by which they might defend themselves before tribunals; he would suggest what needed to be said, he would supply the eloquence that adversaries could not resist.[551] Those are not to be feared who have power to kill the body but are not able to kill the soul – and since this is safe, nothing of the whole person perishes, since he promised that not even a hair of our head would perish.[552]

What then is there that can either frighten or destroy those who are free from these dispositions? On the other hand, one who is subject to them cannot carry on the work of the gospel without flinching.[553] A bishop sees what is good for the flock and wants to have regard for its welfare, but the affections immediately cry out, 'If you proceed in this direction revenues will immediately decrease, you will offend the prince, you will not get a cardinal's hat, you will be thought crazy.' No one, of course, should be deliberately angered, but if Christ's estate cannot otherwise be maintained, one must bear with a stout heart loss of possessions, dishonour to reputation, danger to life. The apostles nowhere provoke magistrates or princes, they do not cast in the teeth of the populace the disgraces of its former life. They only invite to Christ, to newness of life, to salvation, and they accommodate themselves to all, as far as permitted, to entice more people to Christ.[554]

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550 Cf Matt 19:26.

551 Cf Matt 10:19–20 and Mark 13:11, but the imagery here reflects especially Luke 12:11–12 and 21:14–15, where forms of the Greek verb *ἀπολογέομαι* are found, commonly associated with the speech of or for a defendant in a public trial; hence here the word *apologia* 'speech.' This sense of the verbs is elaborated in Erasmus' annotation on the two Lukan passages respectively (*qualiter aut quid respondeatis* and *non praemeditari quemadmodum respondeatis*). The paraphrases on the verses also incorporate the imagery implied by the Greek verbs; cf CWE 48 30 and 177. On the word *apologia*, cf *Apologia* n2.

552 The first part of the sentence alludes to Matt 10:28, the last part to Luke 21:18.

553 'Without flinching': *constanter*, as in the paraphrase on Acts 18:9 CWE 50 113. The apostles as models for later bishops are frequently characterized in the *Paraphrase on Acts* by their *constantia*; see the Index of Latin Words in CWE 50 svv *constantia* and *constanter*.

554 Cf 1 Cor 9:20–2. Erasmus' characterization of apostolic action (neither provoking nor reproaching, but inviting) is set in relief in eg the paraphrases on Acts 2:37–40, 4:1–21, 5:26–9 CWE 50 22–3, 30–5, and 42–4.

But if we are so engulfed in the surge of human affairs that we cannot push on to where Christ and the soul's desire invite, we must nevertheless struggle in that direction with all our strength. Fortune has heaped wealth upon you. It may not be expedient to renounce it; hold it scornfully, and, to use the words of Paul, possess it as though you do not have it. Then you will feel less distress if some portion is docked, less fear if some loss looms overhead. You happen to have distinguished parents, to have found an outstanding woman as your wife: have them as though you do not have them, and possessing them will divert you less from piety.[555] You have come into favour with a prince; do not on this score swell with pride, but rather turn this to use, as far as you can, in the interest of Christ. You are involved in the affairs of the court; free yourself to the best of your ability – meanwhile, however, culling from this evil any opportunity for benefit that presents itself.

Meanwhile, always let Martha murmur against Mary, envious of her freedom from the daily cares.[556] Above all, let innocence be at hand; even bad men are ashamed to assail innocence. Let love be present, open and eager to do good to all. Let there be a gentle disposition, which either mitigates or endures the harshness of the ungodly. Let a guileless prudence be present, and a prudent candour, which avoids injury without inflicting injury on anyone.[557] Let there be present a most confident faith that does not doubt at all the promises of Christ. If those who follow in the place of apostles exhibited hearts and minds like this, then truly the church of Christ would deserve to be called the kingdom of heaven.[558] At present, many are so far removed from this portrait that there are some who laugh at these things as worn out and useless, some who teach the direct opposite.

Since, however, the goal of all of Christ's teaching is that we ourselves should live our lives in a godly and holy manner, it will be fitting to track

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555 These comments on wealth, parentage, and spouse apparently allude to 1 Cor 7:29–31, though the words on wealth specifically attributed to Paul are paraphrastic. Cf the similar admonition in *Enchiridion* CWE 66 62–3.

556 Cf Luke 10:38–42.

557 Perhaps an allusion to Matt 10:16; cf the paraphrase on the verse, CWE 45 170–1. Note the definition of common 'worldly' prudence in *Enchiridion* CWE 66 92.

558 The exegetical tradition frequently identified in some manner kingdom and church; cf eg in antiquity Augustine *De civitate Dei* 20.9 and, in the medieval world, Nicholas of Lyra *Gloss* on Matt 13:52. For a historical account of Christian reflection on the relation between kingdom and church see André Boland 'Royaume de Dieu' in *Dictionnaire de spiritualité: Ascetique et mystique, doctrine et histoire* founded by M. Viller SJ et al, continued by A. Rayez et al, 17 vols (Paris 1932–95) 13 1026–97.

down in the divine books the example and pattern for all the actions of our lives, searching chiefly, however, in the Gospels, from which our duties are especially derived. We must observe, therefore, how Christ himself conducted himself in different ways towards different people: towards his parents as a boy and as a grown-up (as a boy, he obeys; when he teaches, he gives them little esteem),[559] towards his disciples, towards the proud Pharisees, towards those who question him insidiously,[560] towards the ingenuous populace, towards the afflicted, among his own, among outsiders, among magistrates. We must observe also the ways in which everywhere he prepared and fortified his disciples by showing them how they ought to conduct themselves towards relatives and friends – he does not want these even to be greeted at the expense of preaching the gospel[561] – towards those who are well-deserving and receive the grace of the gospel, towards those who reject it,[562] towards persecutors, Jews, gentiles, towards the weak or erring brother, or[563] towards a brother who is beyond correction, towards ungodly judges, towards the flock entrusted to them,[564] and the other things that we usually meet in the daily experience of life. I shall, if you like, mention some of these passages on account of the less well trained, so that they can more easily note the rest for themselves.

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559 For the obedience of Jesus see Luke 2:51; for examples of 'little esteem' see *Ratio* n492.

560 Compare the suggestive allusions here to the varied responses of Christ to the people of his world with the extended account of the 'diversity' of Christ in *Ratio* 552–9; and for the 'insidious questions' see *Ratio* 555–6 with nn338–41.

561 Cf Luke 10:4b 'Salute no one on the road' (RSV). The annotations on Luke 10 offer no discussion on this clause, and Erasmus seems to have overlooked it in his paraphrase on the chapter; but the qualification 'at the expense of preaching the gospel' reflects his interpretive approach elsewhere to these commands of Jesus; cf eg *Ratio* 649, where Erasmus includes these commands among 'prescriptions' not to be taken literally. In his paraphrase on Mark 6:6–16 he says explicitly that in his commands to the Twelve Jesus was speaking in hyperbole, and he adds, 'Whatever delays the progress of the gospel must be rejected' CWE 49 78.

562 Cf Matt 10:11–14; Mark 6:10–11; Luke 9:4–5, 10:5–11.

563 or] Added in *1523*

564 Some of the allusions in this sentence may be general and imprecise but cf the following: Matt 5:11–12, 44, 10:23 and Luke 21:12–13 (persecutors); Matt 10:5–6 and 16–20, Mark 13:9–13, Luke 21:12–15, also Matt 15:22–8, Mark 7:25–30 (Jews and gentiles); Matt 18:10–22 (the brother, weak or incorrigible); Matt 10:17–19, Mark 13:11, Luke 21:12–15 – though the expression may recall Luke 18:1–8 (the ungodly judges); John 21:15–17 (the flock entrusted).

There are two things especially that Christ constantly inculcates – faith and love. Faith ensures that we cease to trust ourselves and we place all our trust[565] in God; love urges us to do good to all. First, in Matthew, the ninth chapter, he imputes to the paralytic the faith even of others: 'And Jesus seeing their faith' [9:2]. Shortly after, he does not help the blind men, who implore his mercy and help, until he has made a stipulation about faith: 'Do you believe,' he says, 'that I can do this for you?' [Matthew 9:28]. And when they replied that they believed, then at last he touched their eyes, saying, 'According to your faith be it done to you' [Matthew 9:29]. Again, in the same chapter, he says to a woman who has gained her health by touching his garment: 'Courage! daughter, your faith has made you whole' [9:22]. In the same Gospel, the fourteenth chapter, as the disciples were terrified and cried out for fear, he says, 'Take heart; it is I, fear not' [14:27], and almost immediately Peter, sustained by faith, following the example of his teacher, walks upon the waters. But when he loses confidence, he sinks and hears, 'O you who are too little trusting, why did you doubt?' [14:31].[566] And in the next chapter Jesus cries out (as though he had been compelled by the trust of the Canaanite woman to offer this kindness to a person to whom he did not wish to offer it): 'O woman, great is your faith! Be it done to you as you wish' [15:28].

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565 On 'trust' (*fiducia*) cf *Ratio* n512. Erasmus defended his emphasis on faith and love here in the *Ratio* against the criticism of Jacobus Latomus; cf *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* (1519) CWE 71 68–9. Throughout his New Testament scholarship Erasmus frequently discusses the relation between faith and love, and the criticism of opponents forced him to address the subject at considerable length in his later years; cf his response to the Paris theologians in *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* (1532) CWE 82 69–76 and the *1535* additions to the annotations on 1 Cor 13:2 (*charitatem non habeam*) and on 1 Cor 13:13 (*maior autem horum*), on which see 'New Testament Scholarship' 380 with n1633. Elsewhere also he offered important explications of the relation between these two theological virtues; cf eg *De libero arbitrio* (1524) CWE 76 30–1 and 77–8, *In psalmum 4* (1525) CWE 63 258, and *Explanatio Symboli* (1533) CWE 70 238–9.

566 Erasmus cites the Vulgate in the brief passages in this paragraph, hence the words 'for you' added in the quotation of Matt 9:28. However, in the citation of 14:31, for the biblical expression 'O you of little faith,' he replaced (from *1519*) the Vulgate's *modicae fidei* with the more vivid and theologically more provocative *exigua fiducia praedite*, literally, 'endowed with meagre trust,' which, along with *parum fidens* 'little trusting,' is his preferred translation of this expression; cf further Matt 6:30, 8:26, 16:8; Luke 12:28. Note also the language of faith in the colloquial expressions: 'courage' (*confide*; 9:22) and 'take heart' (*habete fiduciam*; 14:27).

In Luke, the seventeenth chapter, he wants the leper to credit his health to faith: 'Rise,' he says, 'go your way, for your faith has made you whole' [17:19]. Again, in John, the fourth chapter, the faith of the ruler obtained salvation for his dying son. The Scripture says, 'The man believed the word that Jesus had spoken to him and went away' [4:50]. And already then, while he is returning home, his servants meet him and report his son's recovery. Once more in Matthew, in the sixteenth chapter, he scolds the disciples, who were concerned about bread, for their *ὀλιγοπιστία* [lack of faith].[567] In the same Gospel, the seventeenth chapter, the disciples wonder what prevented them from being able to heal the epileptic. He says to them, 'Because of your unbelief you were not able' [17:20].[568] And at once, showing them how great the power of faith is, he says, 'If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, move from here, and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you' [17:20]. In the same Gospel, the twenty-first chapter, the disciples are astonished that the fig tree had withered as a result of Jesus' curse. He says to them, 'Truly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, "Be taken up and cast yourself into the sea," it will be done. And whatever you ask in your prayers you will receive.'[569] Likewise in Mark, the tenth chapter, the blind man who was healed hears, 'Your faith has made you whole' [10:52]. In Luke, the eighth chapter, he says to the disciples who had come into danger because of the force of the storm, 'Where is your faith?' [8:25]. And soon in the same chapter the Lord Jesus says to the ruler of the synagogue, who was greatly troubled by the news of his daughter's death, 'Do not fear, only believe, and she shall be well' [8:50]. So great a thing is faith that any vice that corrupts the character of Christians usually arises from weakness in or want of faith.

But on the matter of love, how does it help to specify? For what else does Christ teach, what else does he inculcate by his whole life except the most consummate love? This was the one thing he had come to teach us.

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567 Cf Matt 16:8–11.

568 The last clause, 'You were not able,' is an interpretive addition to the biblical text. 'Unbelief': *incredulitatem*, Erasmus (and apparently the Vulgate) reading the variant *ἀπιστίαν* 'without faith,' 'unbelief' rather than the preferred *ὀλιγοπιστίαν* 'little faith'; cf Matt 17:14–20.

569 Erasmus cites Matt 21:21–2, following closely his translation but omitting in 21:22 the participle *credentes* 'believing' (which appears in both his translation and the Vulgate), perhaps inadvertently, as the word would seem to be important to the argument here.

For in Luke, the twelfth chapter, he says, 'I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what do I want except that it be kindled' [12:49]. There[570] had to be some powerful reason why the Son of God came down to earth. He did not come down to take possession of the kingdom of the world or to hand down to us a philosophy. He came, great envoy that he was, to set ablaze a huge conflagration of love, and for this reason he speaks of fire. Natural love is great, but it is ice in comparison with the love of Christ. Now, in John, that whole scene in the presence of his disciples – what he says, what he does as the time of his death is approaching – what else does it signify, what else does it manifest except a fiery love intensely burning?[571] Who is so unfeeling that he reads those words without tears? This is that love stronger than death, which inflames the lover to the point where he despises death and effects what human aids cannot accomplish.[572] Love alone is the token[573] by which he wanted his disciples to be distinguished from others when he said: 'By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another' [John 13:35]. 'God,' says John,[574] 'is love' [1 John 4:16]; whoever falls away from love, falls away from God.[575] Accordingly, look at what Matthew mentions in the twenty-fifth chapter when he explains and sets out in vivid array the deeds deserving of heaven.[576] What are these? wearing sordid clothes? fasting? choice of foods? mumbling a number of psalms?[577] learning? miracles? None of these. What

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570 There ... love of Christ.] Added in *1520*

571 A reference apparently to John 13–17, pointing especially to the foot-washing scene and the Last Supper (chapter 13).

572 'Sronger than death': cf Song of Sol 8:6–7, where the Vulgate reads *dilectio* 'love,' while throughout this passage Erasmus adopts the traditional theological term *caritas*; but for the interchangeability of these two terms see CWE 46 223 n22 and ASD VI-2 153:35n (on John 13:35).

573 'Token': *symbolo*. Erasmus explains the various meanings of this word in *Explanatio symboli* CWE 70 242. See also the colloquy 'An Examination Concerning the Faith' CWE 39 434 n17 and 447 n124, and CWE 43 147 n37. Echoing John 13:34–5, Erasmus frequently remarks that love is the special sign that marks Christians; cf eg the paraphrase on those Johannine verses, CWE 46 166, the paraphrase on Acts 2:44 CWE 50 25, and the *Querela pacis* (antedating both *Paraphrases*) CWE 27 301.

574 John] Added in *1520*; previously, 'he' (implied in the verb)

575 A paraphrase on the last two clauses of 1 John 4:16

576 Cf Matt 25:35–6. 'Sets out in vivid array': *ob oculos ponens*, on which see *Ratio* n85.

577 Cf the 'psalm-mumblers' in *Enchiridion* CWE 66 35, *Moria* CWE 27 131, *Lingua* CWE 29 359, *In psalmum 1* and *In psalmum 4* CWE 63 46 and 259. Later in the *Ratio* Erasmus speaks of monks who 'learn the Psalms exactly as parrots learn the words of human beings' 693; cf n1064.

then? He says, 'You fed the hungry, you gave the thirsty drink, you received the stranger, you clothed the naked, you visited the sick, you sustained the prisoner with words of consolation.'[578] These are precisely the duties of love.

Go through the whole New Testament: nowhere will you find any precept relating to ceremonies. Where is there a single word about food or clothes? Where is there any mention of abstaining from food or the like? Love alone he calls his commandment.[579] Discord arises from ceremonies, peace comes from love. In Matthew the Pharisees murmur against Christ because his disciples, constrained by hunger, were plucking the heads of grain – David, who did not scruple to eat the most holy bread, provides their precedent. Jesus says, 'But if you had known "I will have mercy and not sacrifice" [Hosea 6:6], you would never have condemned the innocent. For the Son of Man is Lord even of the sabbath. The sabbath[580] was established for the sake of man, man was not created for the sake of the sabbath.' Now these were God's commandments, yet he does not want them to be observed whenever the ministry of love must be fulfilled. What, therefore, will obscure and insignificant men say when they demand that a person risk his whole life because of a prohibition against eating meats or because of petty regulations more inane than these?[581]

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578 A free rendering of Matt 25:35–6; cf 586 above, where the same passage is cited to denigrate self-righteousness.

579 Cf John 15:12, also John13:34. This passage with its criticism of ceremonies was challenged by the Spanish monks and by Alberto Pio; cf *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1076A–1077B and *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* CWE 84 210.

580 The sabbath ... sabbath.'] Added in *1522.* For the story see Matt 12:1–8; Mark 2:23–8; Luke 6:1–5. Erasmus follows closely the Vulgate of Matt 12:7–8, but the *1522* addition is a paraphrase of Mark 2:27. The murmuring of the Pharisees is not a detail explicit in any of the Gospel accounts, but adds a sombre colour to the characterization of these people and may be recalled from other biblical passages, eg Luke 5:30, 15:2; and John 6:41. Erasmus liked the image; cf 601 with n589 just below.

581 'Obscure and insignificant men': The allusion is unclear, but cf the role of monks in Ep 1353:117–37, who 'make a grand tragic scene out of nothing at all' by insisting on the diligent fulfilment of fasting regulations. Erasmus cited this passage from the *Ratio* in responding to Alberto Pio's criticisms of some of his statements on fasting; cf CWE 84 181 nn444, 447, and 449. Along with ceremonies in general, Erasmus often attacked the regulations for fasting imposed by the church; cf 600 n586 below). In 1520 he himself received a papal dispensation from eating fish during Lent (Ep 1079), a dispensation confirmed in 1525 (Ep 1542). He has left records of his own unfortunate experiences with fasting regulations; cf eg Ep 1353:2–116 and the colloquy 'A Fish Diet' CWE 40 713. For

David,[582] in peril through hunger, dares to eat the sacred loaves though he himself was a secular man,[583] nor does the priest feel any scruple in handing over the bread, though the law handed down by God had forbidden this.[584] And do you permit, or rather compel, an innocent brother to perish[585] because it is the good pleasure of men who are perhaps stupid or superstitious (at any rate invested with no public authority) to prohibit the eating of meat? Indeed, in these matters to what lengths does the tyranny of certain men go – tyranny more truly than superstition? At one time they allow meat broth but forbid meat itself; certain ones, a little more indulgent, grant the intestines also. Occasionally they concede milk products but keep us from eggs. Sometimes they permit nothing but bread and beer and fruit from trees instead of meats.[586] To be sure, I do not condemn anyone who undertakes such things through earnest piety. I do find it astonishing that a Christian wants to put a Christian's life in peril on account of the observance of things like this, that brotherly love is torn apart because of them.

In John, the ninth chapter, a great commotion is raised because Christ had restored the sight of a blind man on the sabbath day. In the same Gospel,

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the unfortunate consequences of the incident that underlay the *De esu carnium* (1522) recommending modification of food laws see the next note and CWE 40 751–2 n263; and for the attack of the Paris theologians, *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* CWE 82 42–3. Erasmus frequently contrasts ceremonies on the one hand and faith and love on the other; cf eg the colloquy 'A Fish Diet' CWE 40 686.

582 David ... because of them.] This paragraph was added in the June 1522 Froben edition; the *De esu carnium* was published by Froben in August (Ep 1341A:322n), but written shortly after the Palm Sunday incident of that year (on the incident see 'New Testament Scholarship' 221 with n885) and 259 with n1074.

583 'Secular man': *profanus*, distinguishing David from the priests who were holy; cf *Ratio* n384.

584 Cf 1 Sam 21:1–6; and the New Testament allusions to it (Matt 12:3–4; Mark 2:25–6; Luke 6:3–4), where David's hunger is the implied motive for the action. For the law restricting to the priests alone the privilege of eating the bread see Lev 24:5–9.

585 Cf Rom 14:15.

586 In the colloquy 'A Fish Diet' Erasmus distinguishes between fasting and the selection of foods. See CWE 40 708:21–32 and nn242, 243; also Ep 1300:32–5. Erasmus repeatedly condemns 'choice of foods' in the *Paraphrases*; cf eg CWE 42 115, 122. The Spanish monks accused him of 'writing many things "here and there" in his books against the choice of foods and the church's fasts'; cf *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1089A–D.

the fifth[587] chapter, they murmur at the cured paralytic, who had, at the bidding of Christ, taken up his pallet on the sabbath.[588] But in Matthew, the ninth chapter, they mutter to themselves because he forgave sins.[589] Elsewhere, because he had on the sabbath healed a bent and shrivelled woman, those murmur who did not scruple to rescue on the sabbath an ox or an ass that had fallen into the well.[590] Christ cries out that man was not created on account of the sabbath, but the sabbath was devised on account of man,[591] and do you wish your laws to prevail so far that a Christian person must sooner perish than swerve from them a finger's breadth?[592]

Again, in Matthew, the fifteenth chapter, they murmur because the disciples took their food with unwashed hands. But here not only does the devout Lord excuse his disciples but even turns the charge back against the critics: those were neglecting the commandment of God because of corban, which the avarice of the priests had devised. He calls it a commandment of God because it concerns a piety rooted in nature: to help parents is a matter of love. From this they were diverting people – with one concern, that something should accrue to the treasury. Christ cries out, 'Not that which goes into the mouth pollutes a man' [Matthew 15:11].[593] And do you require a Christian to

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587 fifth] From *1520*; previously, 'fourth'

588 Cf John 9:1–17 (blind man), John 5:1–11 (paralytic healed), John 5:10–12, where the Jews criticize rather than 'murmur'; but cf n580 above.

589 Cf Matt 9:1–7. Both the annotation (*dixerunt intra se*) and the paraphrase on 9:3 CWE 45 152 interpret the ambiguous Greek to mean that the Pharisees' speech consisted of their silent and inwardly articulated thoughts. But the verb *obgannire* 'to mutter' is strikingly more vivid than the *obmurmurare* 'to murmur' of the paraphrase, suggesting here, however inward, a menacing snarl.

590 Cf Luke 13:10–17.

591 Cf Mark 2:27.

592 Cf *Adagia* I v 6 and *Ratio* n253.

593 Cf Matt 15:1–9; Jesus' retort, however, as represented by Erasmus, reflects the parallel in Mark (7:1–13), where the expression 'corban' is used and explained as 'gift' (7:11). In his annotation on Matt 15:5 (*munus quodcunque est*) Erasmus recognizes the difficulties of interpretation in this verse but assumes that the verse implies a ruse by the religious authorities to divert money to the temple treasury – money that should properly be bestowed upon parents, ASD VI-5 238:155–8; cf the paraphrase on this passage and on its Markan parallel, CWE 45 232 and CWE 49 91, where Erasmus stresses the role of the religious authorities, who are the ultimate beneficiaries of the gift. In the paraphrases on both the Matthean and Markan texts Erasmus identifies the divine law with natural law, for which in Erasmus' thought see CWE 45 232 n8.

eat fish at an enormous cost to his health?[594] Rather, in comparison with you, you do not even regard as a Christian one who gives thanks to God when, under the constraint of his bodily disposition, he eats any kind of food on any day.[595] The kindness that he calls 'alms'[596] pleases Christ so much that in Luke, the sixteenth chapter, he praises the unjust steward, who, though cheating his master, came to the aid of debtors.[597] Is it not this same message that the apostles in their Epistles commend to us? And do we, almost deaf to all these things, burden with more than the Jewish regulations those who have been freed through the blood of Christ?[598] Do we calumniate the innocent because of these regulations?

But it is not part of this enterprise to pursue these things. As for what remains, I shall touch upon matters piecemeal as they arise, once[599] I have pointed out how the teaching and character of the apostles conform to this pattern, and above all, that of Paul, for no one resembled the preceptor Christ more than he. Would that those who have succeeded to the apostolic office and boast that they are called the vicars of Christ could deservedly apply to themselves the words with which Paul exhorts the Corinthians to true piety when he says, 'I ask you, be ye followers of me, as I also am of Christ' [1 Corinthians 4:16]. He repeats this in as many words in the eleventh chapter of the same Epistle.[600] It is therefore important to observe how there is not a page in Paul that does not abound in the frequent mention of faith and love, which he commends sometimes separately, sometimes jointly to his people. He brings the two together in the sixteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the

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594 This passage was cited by Alberto Pio; cf CWE 84 181 n447; and cf n581 above.

595 Cf Rom 14:6; and the paraphrase on Rom 14:5–6 CWE 42 78–9.

596 'Alms': *eleemosynam*, in VG (as in ER) among the words of Jesus in eg Matt 6:2–4; Luke 11:41 and 12:33. Erasmus' paraphrase on Luke 16:8 interprets the parable as an exhortation to the wealthy to give alms in exchange for eternal life; cf CWE 48 91–2.

597 Cf Luke 16:1–9.

598 For Erasmus' response to Pio's criticism of this passage see CWE 84 210–11.

599 once ... with great disturbances.] This lengthy addition of *1520*, into which were inserted in 1522 only a few very short additions, concludes on 618 (cf n667), and the *1519* text resumes at n669 thus: '… touch upon matters piecemeal as they arise. It must be observed ...' See 'The *Ratio* of 1520,' section 4 in 'New Testament Scholarship' 188.

600 Cf 1 Cor 11:1, repeating the Vulgate of 1 Cor 4:16 (*1527* and Clementine Vulgate). However, in the preferred reading of 1 Cor 4:16 (both VG [Weber 1773] and the Greek) the words 'as I also am of Christ,' found in 1 Cor 11:1, are omitted, and Erasmus omitted them from both his text and translation of 4:16.

Corinthians, concluding a lengthy exhortation with this 'epilogue' as it were: he says, 'Watch, stand fast in the faith, act manfully and be strong. Let everything you do be done in love' [16:13–14].[601] Again, in the first chapter of the Second Epistle to Timothy, he says, 'Hold the form of sound words that you have heard from me, in faith and in love in Christ Jesus' [1:13]. You see how he has joined faith and love, the two twin standard-bearers of all piety. And with these two terms he especially praises[602] the Thessalonians in his Second Epistle to them: 'Because,' says he, 'your faith grows exceedingly and love abounds' [1:3]. He connects them in the First Epistle also – 'and reported to us your faith and love' [3:6].

Likewise, in the Epistle to the Romans, the fifteenth chapter: 'Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope' [15:13]. Has he not joined together three heroines – faith, hope, and love?[603] For[604] what else is peace but mutual love? Now there is nothing in the Romans he praises sooner than their faith, and he thinks their most glorious renown was due to their faith; he says: 'Your faith is spoken of in the whole world' [1:8]. Indeed, on the strength of Habakkuk's testimony, he so fully credits to faith the essence of righteousness that he will not have the fact that Abraham pleased God, great man that he was, imputed to anything else than faith.[605] And he confirms this view by the witness of Genesis: 'Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness' [Romans 4:3; Genesis 15:6]. In the ninth chapter also, he ascribes to faith the fact that the gentiles, though formerly idolaters, were admitted to true godliness; that the Jews, on the other hand, were rejected, a people who had persuaded themselves that they alone were close to God – the responsibility for this, he judges, lies precisely in the fact that the Jews did not trust the evangelical promises.[606] Lives stained with so many disgraceful and criminal deeds beyond the worship of idols did not stand in the way of the gentiles; the solicitous observance of laws and the worship of the eternal deity did not help the Jews. Why? 'Because,' says he, 'not by faith, but as though from works'

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601 For 'epilogue' as 'rhetorical summary' see the annotations on Rom 13:9–10 ('it is restored in this word') and ('love of a neighbour') CWE 56 354–6.
602 praises] Added in *1522*; perhaps inadvertently omitted in *1520*
603 Cf 1 Cor 13:13.
604 For ... love?] The sentence was added in *1522*.
605 Cf Rom 1:17; Hab 2:4.
606 Cf Rom 9:30–2.

[9:32].[607] Moreover, he concludes that whole disputation, in which faith plays the leading role, with the final sentence, 'For all that is not of faith is sin' [14:23].[608] So great is the power of faith that virtue, destitute of faith, turns into vice.

In addition, in the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, he shows that faith is the vehicle by which the whole course of life is borne to the eternal. He says, 'We walk by faith and not by sight' [5:7]. The only goal Paul had set before himself in performing his apostolic service was to bring all races under the yoke of faith.[609] He calls this faith 'obedience' (or, in the Greek, as he himself wrote, *ὑπακοή*), pointing out as he goes along that Christian faith is firm and solid only if inquisitive and subtle lines of reasoning have been thrust aside and it trusts with simplicity and without critical investigation the promises of Christ.[610] 'Through whom,' he says, 'we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith in all nations' [Romans 1:5]. Moreover, writing to the Ephesians, he wants salvation to be credited to faith

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607 In the annotation on Rom 9:32 ('as if from works'), Erasmus in *1519* defined the 'works of the Law' as ceremonies, but in *1527* he replaced 'ceremonies' with 'works that are devoid of faith and love.' The annotation explains the sense of 'as though.'

608 'That whole disputation' may refer simply to chapter 14. However, in the context of the preceding citations from Romans, it appears that Erasmus intends rather almost the entire book of Romans (1–14), for which the last verse of chapter 14 provides the definitive climax. See the annotation on Rom 14:24 ('now to him who is able') CWE 56 386 with n1, where Erasmus cites witnesses that conclude chapter 14 with the doxology (which in the preferred reading is placed at the end of chapter 16). Although neither the *1527* Vulgate nor Erasmus' own text included the doxology here, the existence of the variant might have suggested a reading of the Epistle that concluded at this point the 'whole disputation.'

609 'To bring … under the yoke of faith': *ut … sub fidei iugum adducent*. The image is classical; cf *sub iugum mittere* 'to send under the yoke,' an act symbolizing the submission of those vanquished in battle (cf eg Caesar *Bellum Gallicum* 1.12). The image reflects Erasmus' representation of Paul in the *Paraphrases* as a mighty warrior and victorious commander; cf eg the paraphrases on Acts 9:15–16, 23–4 CWE 50 65–6 and the dedicatory letter to the *Paraphrases* on 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ep 916:231–40. Cf also CWE 66 26: 'the standard-bearer of the Christian forces.' But cf also 'yoke' in Matt 11:29–30.

610 Erasmus explains the expression 'obedience of faith' in the annotation on Rom 1:5 ('to the obeying of the faith') and in the annotations on Rom 4:19–21. 'It trusts,' ie 'faith trusts' (*fides ... fidat*). For the characterization of faith here see the annotations on Rom 4:19 ('he was not weakened in faith') and on 4:20 ('he did not hesitate') and ('he was strengthened'). The Erasmian emphasis appears clearly in the paraphrase on these verses; cf CWE 42 31.

alone: 'By grace, he says, 'you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves' [2:8]. Further, in the Epistle addressed to the Hebrews, with what elevated style, with what richness of language does he adorn the encomium of faith justly attributing to the merit of faith almost all the mighty deeds of the ancient heroes.[611]

What now is the point of bringing forward some passages concerning love, when all of Paul everywhere breathes, resounds, thunders with nothing but the most ardent love? His words are pure fire, and yet you might think when you read him that you feel something still more ardent that the stammering of human speech is not able to express. Paul's tongue is fiery, but it suggests rather than exhibits the burning in his breast. Further, since love cements everything together, there is no place for discord wherever love holds sway: love makes all things common to all, so far as it lies within its power to do so.[612] Therefore, with this, like a most auspicious omen, Paul begins all his Epistles invoking upon his people grace and peace in place of some outstanding good. It is with these same words that Peter, head of the apostolic senate, offers greetings: 'Grace to you and peace' [1 Peter 1:2; 2 Peter 1:2].[613]

Quite often the concluding statements correspond to the introductions. For Paul, as though he is about to finish the Epistle to the Romans, says, 'The God of Peace be with you all, Amen' [15:33]. When he bids them greet one another with a holy kiss, what else does he commend than fraternal concord – for I interpret the Christian kiss to be of the heart, not of the mouth. It is

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611 Cf Hebrews 11. Here, as in the *Paraphrase* on Hebrews, Erasmus accepted the traditional attribution of Hebrews to Paul; cf Ep 1181:24–31 and CWE 44 212 n3. In his annotation on Heb 13:24 (*de Italia fratres*) he argued against the Pauline authorship.

612 Cf *Adagia* I i 1.

613 The contrast here between 'outstanding [worldly] goods' and '[heavenly] grace' is also explicit in the paraphrase on 1 Pet 1:2 CWE 44 82. Peter here is described by a classicizing image, *senatus princeps* 'head of the senate.' In the Roman republic the expression designated the senator first on the censor's list. This senator usually had the right to speak first on any motion in the senate and to move routine bills. As a result of its privileges, the position became one of great power, and the office was assumed by Augustus as emperor and retained by his successors. For Erasmus' representation of Peter's primacy see *Ratio* nn472 and 651, and CWE 50 17 n50. Erasmus points to the primacy of Peter elsewhere also, eg in the paraphrase on Matt 16:18 ('Peter first in profession of faith and love should … be first in authority') CWE 45 247 and in *Peregrinatio apostolorum* 955, 'Peter held first place among the pre-eminent apostles' (but cf *Peregrinatio apostolorum* nn22 and 24). Cf CWE 40 734 n98.

a common practice to greet by touching cheeks; to wish well for everyone, with hearts united, is a kiss truly worthy of a Christian person.[614] What? Does he not conclude the Second Epistle to the Corinthians in the same way? 'Be of one mind,' he says, 'have peace' [13:11]. But what is 'be of one mind' except 'agree together'? Repeating the idea to implant it more deeply in our minds, he says, *εἰρηνεύετε* 'have peace.' Not satisfied with even these expressions, he adds a reward that is by no means common or trivial: 'And the God of Peace will be with you' [13:11]. (Long ago,[615] he was called God of Powers, the 'God of Armies'; for us he is called 'God of Peace.') Such is the God Isaiah had seen when he calls him 'Prince of Peace.'[616] Further, Paul adds, as though concord were never sufficiently commended, 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, Amen' [2 Corinthians 13:14]. This might be attributed to chance, except that he concludes the First Epistle to the Corinthians in the same way: 'My love be with you all in Christ Jesus, Amen' [16:24]. It is some rare love he requests for the Corinthians, when for them it is his own love that he requests.

Do you wish to hear how Paul loved Christ? 'I desire,' he says, 'to be released and to be with Christ' [Philippians 1:23]. What is sweeter or dearer than life? But he desires to be united with Christ at the cost of his life! Does he not seem to you to be beside himself from some sacred impulse of love when in writing to the Romans, the eighth chapter, he bursts forth into these words, 'Who will separate us from the love of Christ?' [8:35].[617] He says that

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614 For the 'kiss of peace' see Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26. Although in his annotations Erasmus does not comment on the kiss in any of these passages, in his paraphrases on them he emphasizes the contrast between the common kiss and the Christian kiss of peace, the symbol of concord. Cf eg the paraphrase on Rom 16:16 CWE 42 88–9.

615 Long ago] First in *1522*; in *1520*, 'Although long ago'

616 Cf Isa 9:6 (Prince of Peace); and 1 Thess 5:23, 2 Cor 13:11 (God of Peace). In the annotation on Rom 9:28 ('bringing to completion the word') Erasmus explains that in the Septuagint the Hebrew *Sabaoth* is sometimes rendered by 'omnipotent,' sometimes by 'powers.' In the Vulgate, including the Vulgate of the Psalms according to the Hebrew, one generally finds the expression *Dominus exercituum* 'Lord of Armies,' though in the Vulgate of the Psalms according to the Septuagint, the expression is *Dominus virtutum* 'Lord of Powers.' English Bibles characteristically translate 'Lord of Hosts' (AV, NEB, NRSV).

617 Cf the annotation on Rom 8:35 (*1516*) ('who therefore will separate us'): '... it appears that Paul, suddenly carried away, as it were, by emotion, burst forth into this exclamation ...'

this love can be destroyed neither by death nor angelic forces.[618] Again, he sufficiently shows what affection he had for the godly when he desires to become anathema from Christ for the sake of the Jews, who were stubbornly crying out against Christ.[619]

Does the Epistle to the Galatians have a different conclusion? When he wants to promise some great and wonderful reward to those who have not departed from the rule of evangelical doctrine, he prays for nothing else than peace: 'Whoever,' he says, 'shall follow this rule, peace be upon them' [6:16]. He prays similarly for the Colossians.[620] He says, 'And the peace of God that surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus' [Philippians 4:7], and soon, 'These do, and the God of Peace shall be with you' [Philippians 4:9].

What, moreover, would we find if we extracted from the middle of Paul's Epistles passages that commend to us peace and concord? In the second chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians he calls Christ himself peace. He says, 'He is our peace who has made both one' [2:14]. Elsewhere also he calls Christ the *μεσίτης* 'mediator,' because, as one who reconciles, he comes midway between God and man.[621] Likewise John, in his Epistle, calls God himself love – love is so united to God that whoever possesses one of these feels the presence of the other, whoever lacks one of these feels the absence of the other.[622] Again, in Ephesians, the fifth chapter, Paul makes love so proper

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618 Cf Rom 8:38–9.

619 Cf Rom 9:3.

620 A mistake for 'the Philippians'

621 Cf Gal 3:19–20; 1 Tim 2:5. 'As one who reconciles': *veluti reconciliator*. In his annotation (1519) on Gal 3:19 (*in manu mediatoris*) Erasmus observes the difficulty of translating the Greek word *μεσίτης* 'mediator': 'This is, perhaps, one of those distinctive words of Divine Scripture that cannot be translated.' Nevertheless, Erasmus recommends either *conciliator* or *intercessor*: *conciliator* appears with *medius* 'standing midway' in the paraphrase on Gal 2:19–20 CWE 42 112, while the expression *arbiter concordiae* 'arbitrator of harmony' reflects the word in the paraphrase on 1 Tim 2:5 (*unus est qui reconciliat … arbiter concordiae* 'there is one who reconciles … the arbitrator of harmony') CWE 44 15. See also the paraphrases on Heb 9:15 and 12:24 ('interceded as a mediator … the new interceder of the New Testament' and 'the high priest … who does not destroy but reconciles') CWE 44 237 and 256. In a *1535* annotation on 1 Tim 2:5 (*mediator Dei et hominum*) Erasmus notes Tertullian's translation *sequester*, in classical Latin an 'agent' or 'go-between with whom money promised was deposited,' in later Latin a 'mediator,' L&S *sequester*.

622 Cf 1 John 4:16. The sentence becomes an interpretation of the latter part of the verse: 'Those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.'

to God that he thinks genuine and true sons of God are recognized by this native quality: 'Be imitators of God,' he says, 'as very dear children, and walk in love as Christ also has loved us' [5:1–2]. But see how much he attributes to love in the first chapter of the First Epistle to Timothy. He calls love the perfect completion of the entire Law: 'Now the end of the commandment is love from a pure heart, and from a good conscience, and from unfeigned faith' [1 Timothy 1:5]. Clearly, he is in harmony with the word of his teacher, who states that the essence of the Law lies in love of God and neighbour.[623]

Again, in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, he ascribes to love the solid strength of the Christian heart that is so far from yielding to the storms of evils that it even boasts in the afflictions it bears for Christ: 'Because,' he says, 'the love of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given to us' [5:5]. Moreover, in the eighth chapter of the same, he attributes to love so much that by its help everything is turned into good. He says, 'To those who love God everything works together for good' [8:28]. Where love grows cold, no laws, however many, suffice; where love is fervent, there is no need of law.[624] Love and do what you will,[625] for genuine love does not sin; it is its own law and everywhere prescribes what is best to do. Accordingly, with what a thundering voice does he declare the praises of love in the thirteenth and also in the fourteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. He calls this a most excellent way that makes people truly great in the work of Christ.[626] He prefers this to the other gifts: love is exceedingly beneficial, it is everywhere useful, it alone does not fail, it alone does not sin, without it the other virtues are defective and useless. Again, in the seventh chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians he so promotes concord that he does not want even mixed marriages broken up, and at another point not even a baptized slave parted from an ungodly

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623 See the paraphrase on 1 Tim 1:5 CWE 44 8 with its allusion to Matt 22:35–40.

624 Alberto Pio cited this sentence (not quite accurately) as denigrating human institutions; cf CWE 84 310 with n1186. In his *Paraphrases* Erasmus frequently articulated the notion expressed here; cf eg the paraphrases on Rom 13:8 and on Gal 5:6 CWE 42 76 and 122–3. Erasmus defended the formulation in *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* CWE 82 105–9.

625 Erasmus quotes the famous dictum of Augustine *Tractates on 1 John* 7.8. For the context of the dictum in the *Tractates* see the article 'Love' in Fitzgerald *Augustine* 515.

626 See 1 Cor 12:31 for the 'more excellent way' and 14:1–4: 'Seek eagerly for charity that you may prophesy … and [thus] build up the church.'

master,[627] thus judging that the essence of our calling is concord, not discord: 'God has called you,'[628] he says, 'in peace' [1 Corinthians 7:15].

In how many ways, therefore, does Paul inculcate this virtue! With what deep concern he deters from the things that break up concord and give rise to discord! However, no crop is so productive that these weeds are not intermingled there. God himself was the occasion of discord to the Jews; in refusing to share him with others, they ceased to have him by themselves. Paul frets at this in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans: 'Is God the God of the Jews only, or is he not also the God of the gentiles?' [3:29]. But we must be on our guard that we do not experience what the Jews experienced then. There are so many differences among those who profess religion, and individually they each claim emulously for themselves the high merit of religion, just as though God acknowledges them alone and disregards the people. 'Our religion,' says Ambrose, 'is peace.'[629] Where you see discord ruling, understand that religion is either absent or at least in trouble. It is for them to see what agreement there is among them.[630] And[631] yet not even the common folk are now ignorant of this.

Again, contention must be avoided not only in life but also in sacred studies. Now, arrogance is the source of all discord, as long as each person attributes the utmost to himself, the least to the other, while no one gives in to the other. It is for this the Apostle so often scolds the Corinthians. He says, 'I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfect in the same mind and in the same judgment' [1 Corinthians 1:10], and the rest that follows. And soon in the third chapter: 'For whereas there is envying and contention, are you not carnal and walk according to man' [3:3]. Again, in the eleventh chapter, he reproves them because they were not celebrating even the Lord's supper in harmony, a supper that was the symbol

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627 For 'mixed marriages' (*imparia matrimonia*) see 1 Cor 7:12–16; for the slave, 20–3.

628 'You' as in the *1527* Vulgate (so NRSV); Erasmus himself read 'us' (so AV, DV, RSV).

629 This citation has not been found; cf Holborn 245:23n. However, numerous biblical passages suggest that peace is the core of the Christian religion; cf eg 1 Cor 7:15 and 14:33. In *Querela pacis* peace personified in effect makes the same claim; cf CWE 27 297–303.

630 The contextual language suggests that a reference to the monastic orders is intended.

631 And ... of this.] Added in *1522*

of utmost harmony.[632] He says, 'I hear that when you come together in church there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it' [11:18]. In the next chapter he chides them because they had found the occasion for dissension even in the very gifts of the sacred Spirit. Accordingly, he at once calls them back to concord,[633] using as an example the body and its members, and he appropriates everything as arguments for peace: that one God is common to all, that one Christ died equally for all, the one Spirit imparts his gifts to each as it wills, the one baptism through which we are all grafted into the body of Christ, the one bread that we all eat, the one cup in which we all equally share.[634] For he speaks thus in the tenth chapter: 'For we being many are one bread, one body, who all partake of one bread and one cup' [1 Corinthians 10:17]. Likewise in the twelfth chapter: 'But one and the same Spirit works all these things, dividing to everyone according as it will. For as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, yet are one body, so also is Christ. For in the one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or gentiles, whether bond or free, and we all have been called in one Spirit' [1 Corinthians 12:11–13].[635]

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632 For Erasmus' interpretation of the supper, or the breaking of bread, as a symbol of harmony – a view expressed in various writings – see the paraphrase on 1 Cor 11:18–26 CWE 43 145–8 (1519), *Apologia de loco 'Omnes quidem'* CWE 73 60 (1522), *Paraphrase* on Acts 2:42 (1524) CWE 50 24 with n115, *In psalmum 4* (1525) CWE 63 269–70, and Ep 2263:91–4 (1530). Erasmus' expression of his Eucharistic theology with words like 'symbol' forced him into sharp conflict with the Sacramentarians from 1525 and created concern among friends such as Cuthbert Tunstall. Cf Epp 1636 ('To the Town Council of Basel,' 1525), 1637, and 1638 (to and from Conradus Pellicanus, 1525), Ep 2226:39–55 (from Tunstall, 1529) answered by Erasmus in Ep 2263:91–4. See further *Epistola ad fratres Inferioris Germaniae* (1530) CWE 78 294–6; and on Erasmus' conflict with the Sacramentarians see 'New Testament Scholarship' 260 with n1075.

633 Erasmus' commitment to 'concord' found many opportunities for expression during the rise of the reform movement, culminating in his 1533 exposition of Psalm 83, *De concordia* CWE 65 134–216. Cf James McConica 'Erasmus and the Grammar of Consent' in *Scrinium Erasmianum* ed Joseph Coppens, 2 vols (Leiden 1969) II 77–99.

634 While most of these affirmations can be referred to 1 Corinthians 12 ('the next chapter'), some suggest other biblical passages as well; cf 1 Cor 12:5–6 and 8:6, Eph 4:6 (one God); 2 Cor 5:14–15 (one Christ died for all); 1 Cor 12:11 (one Spirit); 1 Cor 12:13, Eph 4:5 (one baptism); 1 Cor 10:16–17 (one bread and cup).

635 Erasmus quotes the Vulgate except for 'we have been called' (*vocati sumus*), which here may be a recollection of Eph 4:4 and Col 3:15. In its place the Vulgate had translated *potati sumus* (Erasmus' *hausimus*) 'we have drunk in.'

Moreover, writing to the Galatians, he so emphatically wants these nurseries of discord to be destroyed by baptism that he calls anyone initiated into Christ a new creation.[636] Further, in the sixteenth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans he asks that the originators of divisions even be avoided: 'Now I beseech you, brethren, to mark those who make dissensions and offences, contrary to the doctrine that you have learned, and to avoid them' [16:17]; and pointing out at once the source of this evil, he adds, 'For they that are such serve not Christ our Lord but their own belly' [16:18].

We have seen even in our day extraordinary turmoil among Christians. I have found that it has been stirred up precisely by those whose quest for gain seemed to obstruct the purer teaching of Christ.[637] You might have said that they would sooner overturn everything than refrain from innards once tasted.[638] So tenaciously do they hold the wealth that is collected from remissions shamelessly proclaimed, from arrangements, from dispensations, from empty promises many[639] offer for sale under the pontifical name, from the application of merits, from consciences wrongly ensnared, from a false view of religion, from the delusion of helpless little women and the poor, ignorant populace.[640] Ambition led many to raise this commotion: they grant so much to their own glory that they would rather Christ's doctrine be abolished than

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636 Cf Gal 6:15, though 2 Cor 5:17 may also be in mind.

637 A reference, apparently, to the emergence of Luther on the ecclesiastical scene. Cf Ep 1033 (19 October 1519, only a few months before the February 1520 edition of the *Ratio*), where Erasmus describes the current situation as a 'tumult' (Ep 1033:196) and regards the monks, eager for financial gain and political power, as the originator of the turmoil because of their dislike of 'the vigour of the gospel teaching' (Ep 1033:133–50). In Ep 1875:145–57 (*1527*), Erasmus places upon the Dominicans the responsibility for the 'Lutheran tempest.'

638 There is a parallel to this saying in Hans Walther *Proverbia Sententiaeque Latinitatis Medii Aevi* 9 vols (Göttingen 1963–9) II 12673: *intestina canem semel adgustasse periculum est* 'It is risky for a dog to taste once the innards.' I owe the reference to Alexander Dalzell.

639 many] First in *1522*; in *1520*, 'they'

640 Cf Ep 1033:133–43: '... the mendicant friars ... very many [of them] ... ensnare the consciences of men ... Of indulgences they were speaking in such terms that even the unlettered could not stomach it.' In the spring of 1517 Johann Tetzel, a Dominican, had preached a papal indulgence that did much to stir Luther into action. For the sale of indulgences by the monks see also the colloquy 'Military Affairs' CWE 39 58 and 62 n24. 'Arrangement' renders *compositio*, here specifically an arrangement for paying restitution; cf Allen Ep 2285:96–7 and CWE Ep 2285:103–4. Belief in the church's 'treasury of merits' facilitated the sale of indulgences, especially on behalf of the dead. Cf *Ratio* n267.

that they themselves appear to have been ignorant of anything. Many were infected by a twofold disease: greed and ambition. I[641] do not, for the present, discuss how far the authority of the church or of the Roman pontiff prevails in matters of this sort. I only point out the sources of discord, sources that quite clearly arise from nowhere but our own desires.

Paul, therefore, perceiving how great a plague discord is, inculcates and reiterates nothing sooner, more frequently, more passionately, than concord, peace, mutual love – not only with those who share our religion (which love [Paul] calls *φιλαδελφία* ['brotherly love']), but also with those who were strangers to our mysteries.[642] For thus he admonishes the Thessalonians in the fifth chapter of the First Epistle: 'See that none render evil for evil to anyone, but always follow that which is good towards each other and towards all' [5:15]. One has something more than concord with all when one is eager to do good to all.

Again, in the twelfth chapter to the Romans: 'If it is possible, as much as it lies in you, have peace with all men. Do not avenge yourselves, dearly beloved, but give place to wrath' [12:18–19]. In passing, he intimates that concord cannot exist among people of a fierce and headstrong nature, where injury is immediately returned for injury, where no one ever gives up his own right in any respect, no one wishes to overcome a bad deed with a good deed.[643] For if this window is once opened to our hasty tempers, that we may justly avenge an intolerable injury, everyone who has been angered will think his case just, everyone will be deluded by his own mind. Accordingly, to keep us further from this pitfall, Christ and his imitator Paul,[644] exhort us to repay injury with a kindness. He says, 'Bless those that persecute you; bless and curse not' [Romans 12:14]; and soon, 'If your enemy is hungry, give

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641 I ... desires.] Added in *1522*. With Erasmus' concern expressed here over papal involvement compare his comment in Ep 1875:157–61.

642 In his *Annotations* Erasmus repeatedly comments on the Greek expression commonly rendered 'brotherly love.' Cf the annotation on Rom 12:10 ('loving in turn the charity of brotherhood'), the annotation on 1 Thess 4:9 (*de charitate fraternitatis*), and the annotation on 2 Pet 1:7 (*amorem fraternitatis*), where Erasmus distinguishes *philadelphia* from *agape* (*ἀγάπη*): *philadelphia* is the love of Christians specifically for Christians, *agape* the love of Christians for all people; cf also CWE 44 112 n11.

643 Cf Rom 12:16–21.

644 The expression 'imitator of Christ' (1 Cor 11:1) provided for Erasmus an important descriptor of the Apostle; cf *Ratio* 602 with n600 and 641 with n797.

him to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him drink; for doing this you will heap coals of fire upon his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good' [Romans 12:20–1]. And where, meanwhile, are those who, though they wish to be regarded as the overseers[645] of the Christian religion, stab a good man – and one who has benefited them – with tongues whose points have been daubed with deadly poison? They do it with persistent determination, with deliberate design, with devoted commitment, under the pretext of piety, which is the most wicked grounds for doing harm.[646]

In his own person Paul exhibited what he taught. For in the fourth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians he says, 'We are reviled and we bless, we are persecuted and we suffer it, we are blasphemed and we entreat' [4:12–13] – clearly imitating him who on the cross itself prayed to the Father on behalf of those responsible for the cross.[647] How great, in fact, is Paul's displeasure when he reproves the Corinthians, because they were taking each other to court over financial matters and did not accept injury and loss of property rather than loss of peace and concord. But since, according to the comic poet, 'Compliance wins friends, truth earns hatred,'[648] Paul becomes all things to all people, taking on the character of a sort of polyp, if I may say so.[649] He rejoices with those who rejoice, weeps with those who weep, he is pained along with those who have suffered offence, he is weak with the weak.[650] For there is also a compliance appropriate to piety that everywhere accommodates itself to either the weakness or the opinion of another.

I judge it superfluous to adduce testimonies from the Epistle of John, since he speaks of nothing but love and concord. Let us hear Peter, prince of

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645 'Overseers': *antistites*. The word is found in early Christian literature to refer to both priests and bishops (cf L&S *antistes* B). It is probable, however, that Erasmus uses the word here to include monks and professors of theology, men specifically noted in *Lingua* (1525) for their poisonous tongues (CWE 29 352–3), while the allusions to poisonous tongues and self-proclaimed angels in the paraphrase on James 3:10 CWE 44 157 also suggest the monks.

646 In April 1519 Erasmus wrote to Petrus Mosellanus with a long list of people who had attempted to poison his reputation; cf Ep 948 and n652 below.

647 Cf Luke 23:34. The authenticity of this Lukan text is disputed, but the verse was included in both VG and ER.

648 Cf Terence *Andria* 68. For Paul's reprimand of the Corinthians for their litigation see 1 Cor 6:1–11.

649 Here 'polyp,' but cf 'chameleon' and 'Proteus' above, *Ratio* 573 with n441.

650 Cf Rom 12:15 and 2 Cor 11:29.

our profession according to Christ.[651] In the fourth chapter of the First Epistle, when he urges the principal obligations of piety – sobriety, vigilance, and prayers – he puts love before all of these: 'Be sober and watchful in prayers,' he says, 'but above all have mutual love among yourselves, and that constantly,' or as the Greek word seems to mean, 'with fervour' [4:7–8].[652] To commend this to us even more he says, 'Love will cover a multitude of sins' [4:8].[653] Meanwhile, how beautifully does Peter correspond to his teacher from whom he had specifically heard, 'Follow me' [John 21:19]. His teacher says, 'Forgive and you will be forgiven' [Luke 6:37], and 'Many sins are forgiven her, because she loved much' [Luke 7:47], and 'Forgive us as we also forgive' [Matthew 6:12]. Why today are those who are weighed down by the burden of their sins summoned to pardons, arrangements for restitution, and similar remedies[654] rather than to that which was set forth by Christ, by the chief apostles? Why do we prefer the doubtful to the certain? If anyone will compare the beginnings of the nascent church with these remedies, one will find only the auspicious signs of love. All alike with one heart and mind sit together in the same place. They are equipped with tongues of fire. The multitude of believers had one heart and one soul. The resources of all are brought together for the common use.[655] There is no mention anywhere of ceremonies.

Now just as a resolute mind and true godliness are the companions of faith and love, so, when the latter languish or are absent, superstition thrives. And just as unalloyed godliness rests upon purity of mind, so superstition commends itself by ceremonies. Paul frequently designates the former by

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651 Cf Matt 16:13–19. 'Prince of our profession': *professionis nostrae princeps*, where *princeps* seems to refer to Peter ambiguously as 'first' to confess Christ and chief among Christians for having the authority of the keys. For Peter as *senatus princeps* see *Ratio* n613.

652 The comment reflects Erasmus' 'correction' of the Vulgate's *continuam* 'constantly.' He preferred *vehementem* 'with fervour' as here; cf the annotation on 1 Pet 4:8 (*continuam*). This passage in 1 Peter was at the centre of an incident in which Erasmus had given offence and was in turn slandered: the story is told in Ep 948:114–40 (April 1519) and in a *1519* addition to the annotation on 1 Pet 4:7 (*et vigilate*); cf nn645, 646 above.

653 In accordance with his Greek text, Erasmus translated the verb, as here, in the future tense, 'will cover.' The verb is present tense in the Vulgate and in the preferred reading; cf eg NRSV.

654 Cf n640 above. 'Arrangements for restitution' here renders *compositiones*.

655 Cf Acts 2:1–5 (one place, tongues of fire); Acts 4:32 (multitude of believers, one heart); Acts 2:44–5 and 4:34–5 (resources for common use).

the word 'spirit,' the latter by the word 'flesh.' This, I think, is what he has in mind when he writes to the Galatians: 'Are you so foolish that when you began with the spirit, you are ending with the flesh?' [3:3]. Having begun from evangelical faith and love, are you sliding back into Judaism? In the twelfth chapter to the Romans he urges the same thing, albeit in a different way, that having abandoned Jewish rites, they should turn to the pursuit of a piety that lies within the mind: 'I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, your rational service' [12:1].[656] That he himself had done so he affirms when he writes in the first chapter to the Romans in this way: 'Whom I serve in my spirit in the gospel of his Son' [1:9].[657] While he still lived in the manner of a Jew, he worshipped God, but with appointed fasts, with new moons, sabbaths, washings, choice of foods. Now, having embraced another kind of worship, he worships the Father neither in the mountain nor in Jerusalem, for the Father delights in those worshippers who worship in spirit.[658] Again, in the seventh chapter: 'That we should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter' [Romans 7:6]. What he elsewhere calls the 'flesh' he here calls the 'letter.'[659] He makes the same point in the fourth chapter of the First Epistle to Timothy, saying, 'Bodily exercise is profitable to some extent, but godliness is efficacious for all things' [4:8]. Why does he say 'to some extent'? Because it is advantageous to one but not to another; it is fitting at one point but not at another; it is extolled today but will soon come into disfavour. The godliness that is of the mind is common to all and has a place everywhere.

In addition, who does not know that nothing is more deadly than a counterfeit holiness? But there is no mask through which this more deceives than that of ceremonies. The common people especially are guided by what

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656 Erasmus follows the Vulgate except that he replaces the Vulgate's *rationabile* 'reasonable' with the *rationale* 'rational' of his own translation, a substitution intended to clarify the Apostle's meaning that Christian worship was an activity of the mind and spirit; cf the annotation on Rom 12:1 ('reasonable service').

657 Though Erasmus here retains the Vulgate *servio* 'I serve,' he preferred *colo* 'I worship,' the sense implied here as he goes on to speak of his manner of worship. Cf the annotation on Rom 1:9 ('whom I serve').

658 Cf John 4:21 and 24, where Jesus responds to the Samaritan woman that in the future neither the Samaritan holy place (the mountain) nor the Jewish holy place (Jerusalem) would be the centre of worship, because worship would be spiritual.

659 Cf the long disquisition on 'flesh and spirit' in *Enchiridion* 'Fifth Rule' CWE 66 65–84, especially 70.

they see. Do you wish to hear with what great destruction the pretence of piety assails piety? Let us hear Paul as he speaks so prophetically in the third chapter of the Second Epistle to Timothy. 'But know this, that in the last days dangerous times shall come, and men will be lovers of themselves, covetous, haughty, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, wicked, without affection, without peace, slanderers, profligate, unmerciful, without kindness, traitors, stubborn, puffed up, lovers of pleasures more than of God, having an appearance indeed of godliness, but denying the power thereof' [3:1–5]. What does Paul add? 'Imitate these'? Certainly not, but, 'Avoid these; for of this sort are those who creep into houses and lead captive silly women laden with sins, who are led on by various desires' [3:5–6]. I ask you, reader, do you not think that Paul is pointing his finger directly at certain members from their orders who, though they are involved in the very heart and soul of worldly affairs, call themselves monks and make indigence a pretext as they strive for the luxury, the glory, and the tyranny[660] of kings? And would that they were so few that the odium felt for such monks did not weigh down heavily upon the good ones! As it is, there are so many that the good ones are overwhelmed by the multitude of the evil ones and by their despotic power.

Hear what Paul thinks about the feast days of the Jews, about the distinction of foods (for the sake of these things the Jews, though readily inclined to other crimes, would refuse not even death):[661] 'One who regards the day regards it unto the Lord, and one who does not eat does not eat unto the Lord. Let everyone be fully persuaded in his own understanding' [Romans 14:6, 5]. Then soon, in the same chapter, 'The kingdom of God is not meat and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit' [14:17]. What he writes to the Corinthians in the tenth chapter of the First Epistle accords with these statements: 'Whatever is sold in the marketplace eat, asking no question for conscience sake. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof' [10:25–6]. Again, in the sixth chapter, 'Meat for the belly and the belly for the meats, but God will destroy both it and them' [6:13]. Moreover, with what strong feeling does he, in the second chapter to the Colossians, scorn the teachings of those who prescribe thus: '"Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch." All these things perish as they are used and belong to human precepts and doctrines. In name, indeed, they have the appearance of

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660 the glory, and the tyranny] Added in *1522*. For a helpful exposition of this passage in the *Ratio* see CWE 44 49 n2.

661 Cf eg 1 Macc 2:29–38 and 2 Macc 6:18–7:42.

wisdom, through scrupulous observance and abasement of mind and injury to the body, not through any assistance they offer in satisfying the needs of the body' [2:21–3].[662]

Paul, indeed, everywhere concerned for concord, advises that the strength of the perfect should bear the weakness of others[663] – but for a time, and on the principle that the weak progress and cease to be weak, and with respect to those things that have been too deeply implanted as a result of the former life to be able to be suddenly uprooted. Paul is indignant towards one who eats food that wounds the soul of a brother, a brother for whom Christ died.[664] But he is also indignant towards one who assesses the conscience of another on the basis of such matters. 'Why,' he says, 'is my liberty judged by the conscience of another?' [1 Corinthians 10:29]. Occasionally there are times when a knowledgeable love adapts itself to another's weakness, but it does so in the manner of a teacher who comes down to the level of his pupil, in the manner of a physician who accommodates himself to the feelings of the sick. On the other hand, what sort of thing is it when we ourselves create the stumbling blocks? When we find grounds for pride in them? When we think we are better simply because we are the weaker? Because we gratuitously attack those from whom we ought to have learned and voluntarily precede those whom we should have followed?

'What then?' someone will say, 'Do you condemn ceremonies?' Far from it! I praise the rituals with which the church choir both long ago and today goes through its mysteries. These rituals bring something before us and add majesty to the divine worship, though even in these there should be due

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662 Erasmus has adopted his own translation here. The last clause of the Greek text is difficult; cf the translations: 'not in any honour to the filling of the flesh' (DV), 'they are of no value in checking the indulgence of the flesh' (RSV). In his annotation (*rationem quidem habentia sapientiae*) and in his paraphrase on Col 2:23 CWE 43 418–19 Erasmus interprets *τιμή* 'honour' as meaning 'help,' 'assistance'; hence *non per honorem aliquam* 'not through any assistance.' The line of thought in this passage, with its contrast between flesh and spirit, its allusion to Col 2:21–3, and its admonition about the weaker brother, finds an interesting recapitulation in *In psalmum 4* CWE 63 231–2.

663 Cf Rom 15:1.

664 Cf Rom 14:15. The conditions outlined here on which special consideration is to be given to the weak are more or less standard in Erasmus' exposition of the New Testament; cf eg his first (1517) *Paraphrase*, on Rom 14:1–4 CWE 42 77–8, and his last (1524), on Acts 15:19–20 and 18:18 CWE 50 98 and 114.

measure.[665] But what I do not approve is this: that almost the whole life of Christians is, through human regulations, weighed down with ceremonies, that too much is attributed to these, too little to godliness; that simple souls, relying on ceremonies, neglect the pursuit of true religion;[666] because of these the tranquillity of the Christian body is torn to pieces with great disturbances. For[667] about fifteen years now we have seen great turmoil in public affairs, schisms, wars, pillaging. If anyone asks for the sources, he will find that this entire evil takes its origin from ceremonies.[668]

Meanwhile, this too[669] must be observed, that Christ almost everywhere has compassion on the guileless crowd. It is against only the Pharisees, the scribes, and the rich that he thunders his fearful 'Woe unto you,'[670] clearly

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665 For Erasmus' appreciation of ritual in the liturgy 'both long ago and today' see the dedicatory letter to Ferdinand for the *Paraphrase on John*, Ep 1333:219–65. 'Church choir': *chorus ecclesiasticus*; the annotation on 1 Cor 14:19 (*quam decem milia*) offers a striking Erasmian critique of the role of the choir and of music in the liturgy of the early sixteenth century.

666 Another statement to which Alberto Pio objected; cf CWE 84 311 n1193.

667 For ... from ceremonies.] Added in *1523*. With the previous sentence the *1520* insertion beginning on 602 is concluded (cf n599), and the *1519* text is resumed (at n669), where, as promised, Erasmus 'touches upon matters piecemeal,' citing from the Gospels, in a somewhat random manner, aspects of the life and teaching of Christ that should be considered exemplary for Christians – but especially for the clergy. He concludes the section by noting the hermeneutical significance of his procedure: he has demonstrated what it means to 'philosophize' on Scripture; cf *Ratio* 632 with n744.

668 Cf the similar statement in the *Querela pacis*, published in 1517: 'Let us recall the events of the past ten years' CWE 27 305, where in n98 Betty Radice identifies the period beginning with the formation of the League of Cambrai in 1508 (France, Spain, the empire, and the papacy against Venice), followed by the Holy League in 1511 (Spain, the empire, Venice, joined by England against France). In 1523, when this addition to the text was inserted, the beginning of these events would have occurred 'about fifteen years' ago. These years saw the rise of Luther and the war between Charles and Francis that broke out in 1521. Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 154 with n601 and 212–19.

669 Meanwhile, this too] Added in *1522*; previously, 'it' implied in the verb. The text of *1519*, interrupted in *1520*, continues here. Cf 602 with n599; as he had indicated there, Erasmus here begins to refer 'piecemeal' to sayings of Christ and to events in his life.

670 Cf Matt 23:1–36, Luke 11:37–52 (woes against the Pharisees and scribes); Luke 6:24–5 (woes against the rich).

suggesting that the piety of the people, whether it flourishes or flags,[671] lies in the hands of bishops, theologians, and princes. From these every evil arises. He has compassion on the people, who, while the Pharisees are cultivating their own interests, wander destitute, like a flock of sheep abandoned by its shepherd and scattered.[672] It is thought that Christ fasted in the Jewish manner; the evidence for this view is that it is not he but his disciples who are blamed on this account, as you read in Matthew the ninth chapter.[673] This signifies that those who fill the role of pastor or of prince must avoid any occasion for false accusation. We read of Christ venting his rage only twice: against the chief men, in the twenty-third[674] chapter of Matthew, and against the merchants in the temple, in the twenty-first chapter of the same Gospel. In such actions Christ attested that the universal plague of the church would arise from these sources. He reveals that none is more receptive of evangelical teaching than the simple, the gentle, the humble; everywhere he embraces little ones and proclaims that the kingdom of heaven belongs to them.[675]

By his own example, Christ shows that no one's counsel is to be accepted if it diverts one from piety. For he calls Peter 'Satan' – the Peter who just a little before had been warmly praised – and he orders this counsellor, who wished to lead the way, to follow by imitating his death, as you read in the sixteenth[676] chapter of Matthew. Christ indicates that certain things are to be done even beyond obligation so that public order should not be upset, for in the seventeenth chapter he bids the drachma to be paid, though

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671 or flags] Added in *1520*. Cf *Institutio principis christiani* CWE 27 219, where Erasmus points to the role of secular and ecclesiastical leaders in shaping the character of the common people, and especially to the part played by the good prince.

672 Cf Matt 9:36; Mark 6:34; John 10:12.

673 Cf Matt 9:14–15. 'On this account,' ie for not fasting

674 twenty-third … twenty-first] In this order first in *1520*; previously the chapter numbers were reversed: twenty-first, twenty-third. Cf respectively Matt 23:1–36 and Matt 21:12–13. The *primores* 'chief men' are the 'scribes and Pharisees' who love 'the first places ... and the first chairs' (23:6 DV); cf VG *primos recubitos ... primas cathedras*.

675 Cf eg Matt 5:3, 18:4, 19:13–15; Mark 10:13–16; Luke 18:15–17.

676 sixteenth] First in *1520*; previously, 'eighteenth'; cf Matt 16:21–4. Peter is praised in Matt 16:17–19, and he is urged to follow in 16:24. The contrast here ('lead … follow') is reflected in the paraphrase on Matt 16:23 ('Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me' NRSV): 'Stop opposing the will of my Father. It is for you to follow me, not to go before' CWE 45 249.

he had affirmed that the sons of the kingdom are free.[677] In the twenty-first chapter of the same evangelist he teaches that nothing is more incurable than impiety masquerading in the form of piety. He says, 'Truly, I say to you that the tax collectors and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you' [21:31]. The Pharisees, swollen with pride in the false appearance of holiness, everywhere cry out against the teaching of Christ. The tax collectors and the harlots, acknowledging their disease, hasten to the physician.[678] And in the very same passage he sets forth the parable of the two sons, one of whom is praised for fulfilling, in fact, what he had in words refused to do.[679] With this parable Christ shows that true godliness lies in deeds, not words, in internal disposition, not external appearance, in obedience, not ceremonies.

In the twenty-third chapter of the same Gospel Christ advises that bishops and those who discharge the duties of legitimate office must be obeyed even if they are not entirely worthy, provided their instructions are right and good: 'The scribes and Pharisees have sat upon the seat of Moses, etc' [Matthew 23:2].[680] Sometimes[681] we must heed one who teaches the gospel even though he does not live in the gospel way. But in the same passage he censures the scribes and Pharisees because they weighed the people down with human regulations[682] – which[683] were so far from contributing anything to true piety that sometimes on occasion they diverted one from it – and he implies that such authority figures are to be disregarded in cases of this kind.[684] For elsewhere, too, he defends the apostles against

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677 Cf Matt 17:24–7. On 'public order' see the paraphrase on Rom 13:1 CWE 42 73–4 and the annotation on the same verse ('those, however, which are from God'); also *Institutio principis christiani* CWE 27 235.

678 Cf Matt 9:9–12; Mark 2:13–17; Luke 5:27–31. To acknowledge the guilt is the first step in repentance; cf CWE 44 13 n5, CWE 50 22 n88, and n688 below.

679 Cf Matt 21:28–32.

680 The 'etc' contains the focal point: 'So practise and observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do' (Matt 23:3). 'Have sat': *sederunt*, as in the Vulgate; Erasmus translated 'sit.'

681 Sometimes] Added in *1522*

682 regulations] *constitutionibus* first in *Schoeffer 1519*; previously, *constitutiunculis* 'petty regulations.' Cf Matt 23:4.

683 which ... from it] Added in *1522*

684 Cf Matt 23:3–4. Cf the annotation (added in *1519*) on Matt 23:1 (*super cathedram Moysi*): 'Christ is speaking of those who were teaching the law of Moses rightly, not those who were ensnaring the people by their petty regulations [*constitutiunculis*]. So now, perhaps, we should heed a bishop who teaches the gospel

the Pharisees, who were blaming them because they took their food with unwashed hands.[685]

He shows that one must not rashly or suddenly rush into the ministry of preaching the gospel, for he himself had first received approval from so many witnesses: the witness of John, of the dove, of the Father.[686] He withdrew after his baptism, fasted, was tempted, overcame, and then only when he had been on all sides tested and prepared did he teach; nor did he immediately set out the sum and substance of his teaching but began from the preaching of John, calling people to come to their senses and repent of their former life.[687] For no one desires the help of a physician unless he is dissatisfied with the state of his health.[688]

But with regard to the fact that Christ of his own accord calls certain people, like James, Andrew, Peter, and Matthew, while he rejects certain others who wanted to follow him[689] – by this he wanted us to be warned that not just anyone should be received into the fellowship of our religion, but only those who draw near with an honest and guileless intent. A person's intent

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rightly even though he himself does not live in the gospel way. But who can bear those who for their own advantage make and remake laws against the teaching of Christ?'

685 Cf Matt 15:1–20.

686 For witnesses at the baptism of Jesus see Matt 3:11–17; Mark 1:7–11; Luke 3:15–17, 21–2; John 1:29–34.

687 For the temptation and the beginning of Jesus' ministry see Matt 4:1–17; Mark 1:12–15; Luke 4:1–22. Erasmus found opportunities in the *Paraphrases* to stress the need for proper preparation, for time-tested approval, before undertaking ministry: the first deacons were to be 'men of proven integrity' (Acts 6:3; cf CWE 50 46 with n7), and Titus' 'appointees' were to be 'appointed not too hastily and were to be of known and publicly attested probity' (Titus 1:6; cf CWE 44 58). On the beginning of Jesus' preaching see the paraphrase on Matt 4:17: 'Christ … began the undertaking with John's known and familiar teaching' CWE 45 79; in the paraphrase on Matt 4:1 Jesus himself 'did not jump straight into preaching,' CWE 45 71; and in the paraphrase on Luke 4:1: 'Jesus left the Jordan before undertaking the task of gospel preaching, so as to make his start tested in every respect' CWE 47 125; similarly the paraphrase on Mark 1:13 CWE 49 21. Cf also *Ratio* 579 with n479.

688 A commonplace in the *Paraphrases*; cf eg the paraphrase on Mark 1:4: 'To acknowledge one's disease is a large step towards regaining health' CWE 49 16; and on Mark 2:17: 'Those who acknowledge their spiritual disease … seek a physician' CWE 49 40. Cf n678 above.

689 This theme was developed above in relation to the 'diversity' of Christ; cf *Ratio* 552–3 with nn320, 322.

was, of course, crystal clear certainly to him to whom all things lay open; we, on the other hand, must search for it by conjectural inference.

While Christ preached to all, he never enticed anyone to join him through flattery or human promises, nor did he compel anyone by force, though he was omnipotent. It was with kindnesses that he drew people; it was by the example of his life that he drew them, as did the apostles. Accordingly, one must consider whether those have the right sentiment who are eager to make the Turks Christians by the engines of war only.[690] Rather let the voice of the theologians sound mightily among them, like the voice of the apostles; let a radiant integrity of life shine forth. Thus they become truly Christian.

In Matthew, the eighth chapter, the Gerasenes, having looked upon the miracles of Jesus, ask him to depart from their borders because he was useless for the things they desired.[691] So in our day there are many who prefer[692] that evangelical teaching remain silent, as it opposes the pattern of their own lives.

While still an infant, Christ flees to Egypt, though as a man he offers himself of his own accord to the band of soldiers, indicating that there is a

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690 only.] Added in *1520*. Cf the vivid parallel: 'Destroy a Turk to make a Christian' *De bello Turcico* CWE 64 242. Erasmus lived for many years under the shadow of the Turkish threat. The Fifth Lateran Council (1512–17) was called with the intent of planning for a war against the Turks, and the Turkish advance into Europe in the 1520s added to the sense of danger. See CWE 39 610 n19 for a brief history of the menace of the Turks. Erasmus frequently responded to the threat with the sentiment expressed here; cf Ep 335:180–92 (1515), *Institutio principis christiani* (1516) CWE 27 287, *Querela pacis* (1517) CWE 27 314, Ep 858:85–119 (to Paul Volz, 1518), and *Adagia* IV i 1 *Dulce bellum inexpertis* (1515/1523) CWE 35 431–5. But for his later appraisal see *De bello Turcico* (1530) with Michael Heath's introductory essay describing the development of Erasmus' ideas on the subject in the light of the political and international background, CWE 64 202–9. Cf also *Ratio* n476 and 'New Testament Scholarship' 258 with n1062.

691 Cf Matt 8:28–34. 'Gerasenes' (VG), 'Gergasenes' (ER; cf AV), 'Gadarenes' (RSV); cf Erasmus' paraphrase, CWE 45 150 with n40. Erasmus' interest in his annotations in philological detail is evident in his *1516* annotation on Matt 8:28 (*Gerasenorum*), where he concludes that the three forms were different names for the same place.

692 prefer] in *1523*; previously, 'wish'; *Froben 1522*, *nolint* 'do not wish,' evidently by mistake

time to flee and to steal away, when it seems the imminent peril will not further the glory of Christ.[693]

With a most gentle mind he put up with his own apostles, for so long unformed and unbelieving, until they should gradually progress. Thus priests ought to bear with the greatest mildness the feeble populace, until it advances bit by bit to better things.[694]

He also presented himself as affable and companionable and open to all, not avoiding the dinner parties even of tax collectors and sinners,[695] but everywhere doing the work of the gospel. Likewise, it is appropriate for the bishops or their vicars to accommodate themselves to all, doing so in such a way, however, that they themselves do not come out the richer but make their people better. The prince has summoned you to the palace to be confessor or preacher. Do not occupy this position in order to carry off a bishopric, but so that the sins of the court may be fewer, and[696] you may relieve the oppressed when the opportunity arises.

He attests in the thirteenth chapter of Matthew that close connections thwart those who have charge of the gospel: among his own people he performs fewer miracles because of unbelief. They say, 'Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence, therefore, does he have all these things?' [13:55–6]. Elsewhere his relatives are ready to lock him away, saying, 'He is beside himself' – as we read in the third chapter of Mark [3:21]. Accordingly, one who wishes to use his powers to help the many will have greater success abroad than at home.

He everywhere defends the disciples, who had no answer to give on their own behalf, against the accusations of the Pharisees, as in Matthew, the twelfth chapter, when they pluck the ears of grain on the sabbath; again, in

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693 Cf Matt 2:13–15 (flight into Egypt); John 18:3–11 (surrender to the soldiers). The sentence alludes to an ancient proverb, 'He that fights and runs away may live to fight another day' (*Adagia* I x 40), to which Erasmus refers elsewhere, eg *Enchiridion* CWE 66 109 and the paraphrase on Acts 9:25 CWE 50 67.

694 The characterization of the disciples as slow-witted and unformed is common in the *Paraphrases*; cf eg the paraphrases on Matthew, CWE 45 242–3, 286–7; on Luke, CWE 48 197; on John, CWE 46 37, 169–70, 188, 190. Erasmus will soon make a more pointed critique of the harshness of clergy in response to those who sin; cf *Ratio* 630 with n727.

695 Cf eg Matt 9:9–11, Mark 2:13–16, Luke 5:27–30 (Levi); Luke 19:2–10 (Zacchaeus).

696 and ... arises.] Added in *1523*

the fifteenth chapter, when they take food with unwashed hands; once more, elsewhere, when they do not fast as the disciples of John did.[697]

He teaches in various places that you must strive to be praised not by just anyone but only by the good and by those who praise only honourable things. For in the first chapter of Mark, when a demon cries out in the temple, Jesus replies to it: 'Be silent, and come out of him' [1:25]. In the same Gospel, the third chapter, when the spirits cry out, 'You are the Son of God,' he forbids them, with threats added, to reveal himself [3:11–12].[698]

He admonished Judas; he did not cast him out, nor did he even withdraw from the customary kiss, nor did he betray the man by whom he was to be betrayed[699] – so highly did he value friendship and the intimacy of household companionship. In this he shows that a friendship once formed must not be rashly abandoned. Thus Martin also once endured his Brice.[700]

Peter comes to his senses and repents after his denial, when Christ fastens his eyes upon him; Judas, moved by penitence for his deed, went off and hanged himself with a noose.[701] This reveals two kinds of repentance: one that bears fruit and one that does not. Happy, then, is the sinner upon whom Christ looks when he has lapsed; unhappy is the one who turns away from

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697 Cf Matt 12:1–8 (plucking ears of grain), 15:1–9 (unwashed hands), 9:14–15 (fasting).

698 The incident in Mark 1 occurs in the synagogue, not *in templo*. The paraphrases on the stories referenced here elaborate the point of this paragraph: the witness of those who are evil is, however true, unworthy of credence; cf the paraphrase on Mark 1:25 CWE 49 24, similarly the paraphrase on the Lukan parallel (4:33–5 CWE 47 155–6) to Mark 1:21–8, and the paraphrase on Acts 16:18 CWE 50 103.

699 The evangelists, especially John, note Jesus' knowledge of his betrayer; cf John 6:64, 70–1, 13:11, 21–30. In his paraphrase on John 13:25–6 Erasmus follows exegetical tradition in explaining that Jesus indicates his betrayer privately to John alone, not to the other disciples; cf CWE 46 164 with n29; cf also the paraphrases on John 6:70–1 and 13:11 CWE 46 90 and 161–2.

700 Brice (Latin *Brixius*, d AD 444) was a misbehaved protégé of Martin of Tours, who often expressed contempt for his master. On one occasion, when begging Martin's forgiveness, the latter replied, 'If Christ could tolerate Judas, surely I can put up with Brice.' Brice succeeded Martin as bishop of Tours at the latter's death in 397. See *Butler's Lives of the Saints* ed, rev, and supplemented by Herbert Thurston SJ and Donald Attwater (London 1981) IV 328–9; Sulpicius Severus *Dialogus* 3.15 PL 20 220–1.

701 Cf Luke 22:54–62 (Peter; of the evangelists only Luke [22:61] records Jesus' glance); Matt 27:3–5 (Judas). Cf *De immensa Dei misericordia* CWE 70 110 for a similar contrast between Peter and Judas.

Christ so that he cannot be seen. It is of some value to follow the Saviour even at a distance.[702]

By his own life the Lord shows us what we must do if at some time the ultimate storm of troubles rushes upon us, or the necessity of death, which awaits everyone. As death approaches, he withdraws, watches, prays earnestly, prostrate on the ground, and as though his own defences had deserted him, he depends wholly on the aid of the Father.[703] The martyr who measures his own strength will be no match for his ordeal!

Christ rarely performed miracles that had no value beyond the astonishment they caused – the sort they now generally devise for saints.[704] He healed, he fed, he freed from perils, all of[705] which are acts of kindness. Accordingly, one who wishes to appear great in the church should reveal his greatness by deeds of this sort, deeds that help, not those that attest one's own power – with harm to the people.

He shows in the parable of the sower that one must never be remiss in sacred teaching, even though not everyone profits from it.[706] We must always sow;[707] it is enough if some seeds spring up. Although Christ with his disciples accepted certain things from friends who were offering them

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702 An allusion to Peter, who, before his denial, had followed Christ at a distance; cf Matt 26:58; Mark 14:54; Luke 22:54.

703 Cf Matt 26:36–46; Mark 14:32–42; Luke 22:39–46. As here, so elsewhere Erasmus interpreted Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane as an instructive example for us; cf eg Ep 109:146–7, *De taedio Iesu* CWE 70 64, and the paraphrases on Matt 26:44 CWE 45 355, on Luke 22:45 CWE 48 199, and on Mark 14:41 CWE 49 163.

704 Although Erasmus severely criticized the contemporary practice of venerating the saints, he himself advocated a corrected and qualified veneration of them. The statement here, however, is striking for its implied contrast drawn elsewhere between legitimate miracles and the specious wonders performed by magicians; cf the paraphrases on Luke 4:3–4 CWE 47 127–30 and on Acts 8:9–13 CWE 50 58–9. For some of Erasmus' important statements on the saints and their relics see *Enchiridion* (1503) CWE 66 63–4, Ep 396:71–9 (1516 dedicatory letter to the Jerome edition), the *1519* annotation on Matt 23:5 (*ut videantur ab hominibus*) ASD VI-5 298:699–300:723 (cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 134 with n560), *Modus orandi Deum* (1524) CWE 70 186–201, 'A Pilgrimage for Religion's Sake' (1526) CWE 40 621–50 with the extensive notes on saints (650–74), and *De concordia* (*In psalmum 83*; 1533) CWE 65 203–5, where Erasmus considers the practice of venerating images and the relics of saints.

705 all of] Added in *1520*

706 For the parable of the sower see Matt 13:3–9, 18–23; Mark 4:3–9, 14–20; Luke 8:4–8, 11–15.

707 We must always sow] Added in *1520*

of their own accord, yet we do not read that he demanded or took anything except for the immediate needs of life.[708] Thus, those who preside over the Christian flock should teach without charge. People will be at hand to supply of their own accord what is needed, provided teachers act properly and seek nothing more than nature requires.[709]

The apostles show that we should take nothing from those who spurn salutary admonition, so that we do not appear to countenance their sins. For the apostles, following the instruction of the Lord, even shake off the dust from their feet against those who do not receive the gospel.[710] Those who administer the sacraments of the church or who preach the doctrine of Christ must not be immediately forbidden to do so, even if their life does not adequately correspond. The Lord implies this in the ninth chapter of Mark, when he does not allow one to be forbidden who had performed miracles in the name of Christ, though he did not follow him.[711]

Jesus teaches that a good pastor sometimes withdraws and retires for complete peace and quiet so that he will have more freedom for prayer and for holy reading, and, restored by these things, will return to his episcopal duties with more vigour. Jesus shows this in the sixth chapter of Mark, taking

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708 Cf Mark 15:40–1.

709 For variations on the themes here: that evangelical instructors should not charge, that hearers should contribute to their needs (but only their needs), see eg the paraphrases on Matt 10:10 CWE 45 168, on Acts 16:15 CWE 50 102–3, on 1 Cor 9:14 CWE 43 123, and the *1535* addition to the annotation on 1 Cor 9:13 (*qui altario deserviunt*): '[Those who serve at the altar] are owed a living, not riches' ASD VI-8 204:838–9.

710 Cf the story of Paul and Barnabas at Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:51), in which the two apostles follow the Lord's instruction to shake off the dust from their feet, an admonition reported in Matt 10:14; Mark 6:11; Luke 9:5. Barnabas, with Paul, is called an 'apostle' in Acts 14:14; cf CWE 50 92 n14.

711 Cf Mark 9:38–40. Cf the paraphrase on Mark 9:39: 'A new doctrine must be advanced at every opportunity; how sincerely this is done is none of your business, only how advantageous it is to the business in hand' CWE 49 118. The paraphrase on the Lukan parallel (9:49–50) recalls even more directly traditional Christian teaching: 'The miracle belongs not to the one who does it but to the one who declares his power through his human servant' CWE 47 262. Cf Augustine *Tractates on John* 5.15.2–3 (on John1:33), and for an elaboration of the Augustinian distinction among 'the power of the sacraments, the role of the minister, and the recipient of the sacrament' see Fitzgerald *Augustine* 745.

his disciples to a lonely place to rest for a little while.[712] He shows in many places the sort of retreat appropriate to bishops, as he himself withdrew not for pleasures or for hunting expeditions but for prayer, for more intimate discussions with his disciples. Such were long ago the retreats of leading men, which, because of their solitude, they called monasteries.[713]

Christ cursed only the fig tree, which deceived him, as it were, with its leaves when he was hungry. By this he signified that no type of person is more hateful to him than those who, under a cloak of godliness, are ungodly and, professing religion with their name and dress, live irreligious lives.[714]

He himself prayed frequently and so shows us that we must, with repeated prayers, earnestly entreat God for anything that pertains to our salvation. By frequently giving thanks to his Father[715] he teaches us that whatever good comes to us we should credit to God. He also inculcated insistent prayer by some parables: for example, the parable of the man who through his importunity compels his neighbour to arise at night; similarly the parable of the widow who wearied the inexorable judge with her continual appeals.[716] In more than one place he also enjoins his disciples, 'Ask and you will receive' [John 16:24].[717]

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712 Cf Mark 6:31. Erasmus advocates 'episcopal retreats' for prayer and Bible study in his paraphrase on Mark 6:31 CWE 49 83; also in the paraphrase on John 6:3 CWE 46 75–6. On 'holy reading' cf *Ratio* 495 with n30.

713 'Monastery' is an anglicization of the Latin *monasterium*, coined from the Greek *μοναστήριον*, which is derived from the Greek verb *μονάζω* 'to be alone.' On the origin and character of the early monasteries see the articles 'Monasteries' and 'Monasticism,' with their extensive bibliographies, in Ferguson *Early Christianity* II 766–75.

714 Cf Matt 21:18–22 and Mark 11:12–14, 20–4; in the paraphrase on the Markan passage (CWE 49 139) the interpretation of the story of the cursed fig tree is similar to that given here.

715 For Christ in frequent prayer see eg Luke 6:12, 9:28–9, 11:1, 22:32 and 40–6. A lengthy passage in the *Modus orandi Deum* cites an impressive array of examples from the life of Christ and the apostles showing 'the value of frequent prayer,' CWE 70 157–68. For giving thanks see Mark 8:6, 14:23; John 11:41; and the annotation on Matt 11:25 (*quia abscondisti*), where Erasmus justifies his translation *gratias ago* 'I give thanks' for the Greek expression *exomologoumai* in place of the Vulgate's *confitebor* 'I will confess.'

716 Cf Luke 11:5–8 (importunate neighbour); Luke 18:2–5 (importunate widow). Erasmus juxtaposes these two parables to illustrate the same point in *Modus orandi Deum* CWE 70 157.

717 Comparable passages are found in the synoptic Gospels; cf eg Matt 7:7–8; Luke 11:9–10.

His own life teaches that the natural talent of an outstanding pastor flickers also in a boy and is betrayed by little sparks of a sort, for as a boy of twelve in the temple, he offered a token and a taste of his wisdom. Likewise, at the wedding, before the baptism, he already practised, as it were, and by a miracle offered a prelude to his evangelical ministry, and anticipated his future preaching.[718]

One who wishes to undertake the work of gospel preaching must be cleansed from all the affections of the flesh and must set his mind on heavenly things only.[719] At his baptism Christ was filled with the Spirit: by the impulse of the Spirit he was carried off into the desert; by the impulse of the Spirit he was carried away into Galilee, a victor after the temptation in the desert. This you read in Luke, the fourth chapter.[720] Then he entered the synagogue at Nazareth, and when a scroll of Isaiah had been opened, he came upon a passage about the Spirit: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, wherefore he has anointed me. He has sent me to preach good news to the poor' [4:18]. He bids Nicodemus to be born not of the flesh but of the Spirit, not[721] of the earth but of heaven. He breathes his Holy Spirit upon his apostles, who, after the

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718 It may be a careless slip that appears to place the miracle at Cana (changing water into wine) before the baptism; cf *Ratio* 548 with n296. Here, as there, the Cana miracle follows the allusion to Christ as a boy teaching in the temple.

719 'Affections of the flesh': cf the annotation on Rom 8:7 ('because the wisdom of the flesh'), where, instead of the Vulgate's 'because the wisdom of the flesh,' Erasmus preferred (from *1519*) to translate 'for the affection of the flesh'; the annotation explains his preference. The contrast between the affections of the flesh and the mind set on heavenly things is exploited in *Enchiridion* CWE 66 46–54.

720 Cf Luke 4:1–14. 'Carried away' and 'carried off' both translate *raptus est*; cf *Methodus* 427 with n16, and the corresponding passage in *Ratio* 494.

721 not ... heaven.] Added in *1520*. Cf John 3:3–8. The Greek *ἄνωθεν* 'again' or 'from above' leads to ambiguity in John 3:3, where the text can be read as either 'born again' or 'born from above.' The *1520* addition here reflects the latter. See the paraphrase on John 3:5–8 CWE 46 46 and the annotation on John 3:7 (*et nasci denuo*), where it seems likely that a note from Edward Lee in 1517 citing Chrysostom led to a significant addition to the annotation in *1519*, in which Cyril's expression 'born from heaven' is employed and imitated in the *Ratio* here. Cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* (Note 83) CWE 72 195; for the influence of Lee on the *1519* annotations see 'New Testament Scholarship' 101 with n422.

resurrection, had been commanded to go and preach. Again, he sends a fiery Spirit after the Ascension.[722]

Certain ones want to be regarded as holy by virtue of the fact that they hide themselves from the gaze of the common crowd. But according to the example of Christ, one who is truly Christian does not shrink from the companionship of the weak if there is some hope that they will return to their senses and repent. At a banquet, he is touched by a woman who is a sinner; he converses apart and alone with an unknown Samaritan woman, who was living with her sixth lover; he dines with tax collectors. For why would a loving and trustworthy physician shrink from the sick if there is hope for their health.[723]

In Luke, the fourteenth chapter, he teaches that one should perform a good deed without charge and without hope of interest accrued, and[724] expect no reward for kindnesses done except at the resurrection of the just. He teaches this in a parable he related, pointing out that it is not relatives or neighbours or the rich who are to be invited, but the poor, the disabled, the blind, and the lame.[725]

Although the common crowd of those who think themselves pious place the sum total of piety in petty prayers and petty superstitious ceremonies, Christ shows in Luke, the fifteenth chapter, that the chief duty of godliness, and the one most pleasing to God, is this: that one leads a sinner to come to his senses and repent. He inculcates this one idea in three parables: those of the lost sheep rescued although it was the last of one hundred, the lost coin found although it was the last of ten, and the prodigal son who came to his senses and repented.[726] And therein that supreme pastor, who was the only one of all completely free from all defects of the vices, teaches that a sinner who sincerely returns to his senses and repents must be received

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722 Allusions to John 20:21–3 (disciples are sent, Holy Spirit is breathed upon them) and Matt 28:18–20 (disciples are commissioned to go, baptize, teach) appear to coalesce; but cf also Acts 1:8. For the 'fiery spirit' see Acts 2:3–4; CWE 50 15 n22; also *Querela pacis* CWE 27 303.

723 Cf Luke 7:36–8 (woman at the banquet); John 4:7–26 (Samaritan woman); Matt 9:10, Mark 2:15, Luke 5:29 (tax collectors); Matt 9:12, Mark 2:17, Luke 5:31–2 (physician).

724 and ... the just.] Added in *Schoeffer 1519*

725 Cf Luke 14:7–14.

726 Cf Luke 15:3–7 (lost sheep), 15:8–10 (lost coin), 15:11–32 (prodigal son). Cf the discussion of piety (godliness) in 'New Testament Scholarship' 176 with n692.

with joy, whereas we everywhere revile such and receive them with an indelible brand mark – just as though we were free from all wrongdoing![727]

He everywhere refers his deeds and words to the Father as their author.[728] He has thereby given us an example that we puny humans should not make any claims for ourselves or rely upon our own wisdom.

Whatever ordinary life offered he generally turned into an opportunity for teaching godliness. A coin with the likeness of Caesar is shown to him; he turns the incident in this direction: that from the image of mind we recall what we owe to God.[729] He urges upon the crowds the food that does not perish when they were flocking to him in quite large numbers because of the feast he had provided.[730] Again in the same John, when they demand some sign that could be compared to the manna long ago fallen from heaven, he invites them to the feast of his body, a feast far more sacred than any manna.[731] As the occasion was opportune, he invites to repentance those who told him of the extraordinary punishment of certain criminals.[732] He turns the children who were brought to him into an example of gentleness and modesty.[733] He

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727 Cf *Ratio* 623 with n694.

728 Cf John 5:19–47, 17:1–19.

729 Cf Matt 22:15–22; Mark 12:13–17; Luke 20:20–6. Cf the annotation on Matt 22:21 (*reddite igitur Caesari*): 'You render to Caesar that which has his likeness; render also to God that which has the inscription and the likeness of God, that is, the soul'; similarly, the paraphrase on Luke 20:25: 'Recognize [God's] image stamped on your hearts ... Your whole heart is owed to him ... who created both body and soul [*anima*]' CWE 48 165. The paraphrase on the parallel passage in Mark interprets likewise the response of Christ, CWE 49 145–6. In the paraphrase on the Matthaean parallel, however, Erasmus offers a different interpretation, CWE 45 305–7.

730 Cf John 6:22–33; see 6:27 for the admonition to the crowd.

731 Cf John 6:30–51.

732 Cf Luke 13:1–5. Although in his translation of 13:2 Erasmus adopted the Vulgate's *peccatores* 'sinners' for the Greek *ἁμαρτωλοί*, elsewhere he appears to follow the exegetical tradition in understanding the 'sinners' in this passage as criminals, *scelerati* here in the *Ratio*, but in the paraphrase on the verse *facinorosi* 'malefactors' (cf CWE 48 45–6 with n2) who were compelled to expiate a *manifestum scelus* 'manifest crime.'

733 and modesty.] Added in *1522*. All three synoptic Gospels narrate two stories, virtually doublets, of Jesus with children. In the first set, Matt 18:1–5, Mark 9:33–7, Luke 9:46–8, each Gospel offers a lesson in modesty; in the second set, Matt 19:13–15, Mark 10:13–16, Luke 18:15–17, each reflects the gentleness of Jesus in contrast to the harshness of the disciples. The addition of *1522* may derive from Erasmus' work on the *Paraphrase on Matthew* (1522), where in the paraphrase on 18:1–5 the lesson of modesty is sharply drawn; cf CWE 45 259.

mentions his death and resurrection to those who were showing him the temple.[734] A woman cried out that blessed was the womb that had borne such a babe, blessed the breasts that had offered milk to such a child. He redirects this utterance to show that they rather are blessed who receive the divine word and hence put forth the fruit that will never perish.[735] But this method is too obvious to require illustration by citing examples.

The fact that in John, the twelfth chapter, the Pharisees resolutely plan to kill Lazarus also is a type: the wicked hate not only Christ himself but also those through whom the name of Christ is made glorious.[736]

In the same Gospel one must note the circle in which Christ generally places himself, everywhere commending both the fellowship and the covenant bond of Christians.[737] In the twelfth and thirteenth chapters especially he shows that he is one with the Father, so completely that one who knows the Son knows the Father also, one who spurns the Son spurns the Father also,[738] nor is the Holy Spirit severed from this mutual participation. For so you read in the Epistle: 'There are three who give testimony in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit. And these three are one' [1 John 5:7].[739] Into the same partnership he draws his disciples, whom he calls his vine branches, entreating them to be one with him just as he himself was one with the

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734 Erasmus conflates the narrative of John 2:18–22 with the synoptic narrative of Matt 24:1–2; cf Mark 13:1–2; Luke 21:5–6.

735 Cf Luke 11:27–8; John 15:16; Matt 13:8.

736 Cf John 12:10–11.

737 'Fellowship and covenant bond': *societatem et foedus*. Here as elsewhere Erasmus classicizes the character of the Christian association, in which the concept implied by *foedus* 'covenant,' 'compact,' 'formal alliance' is stressed. Cf eg the paraphrase on Matt 28:19 CWE 45 378–9 with n27 and on Acts 2:46 CWE 50 25.

738 Cf John 14:7 and 15:23 (relation of Father and Son), John 14:16–17 and 15:26–7 (relation of the Holy Spirit).

739 Cf 1 John 5:7. Erasmus cites the text as widely found in the Vulgate tradition (so DV, AV), but these words are omitted by the best witnesses to the Greek text (so RSV). They were omitted from the text and translation of Erasmus' New Testament in *1516* and *1519*, with an annotation (*tres sunt qui testimonium dant in coelo*) of a single sentence to observe that the words are not in the Greek manuscripts. As a result of a vigorous debate, the words were added in the *1522* New Testament with a large addition to the annotation. For the debate see *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* 2 (Note 25) CWE 72 403–19, *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae* ASD IX-2 252:446–258:544, and CWE 44 198 n9. For the story of the events that led to the inclusion of the words in the last three editions of the New Testament, and for the significance of the words in the Trinitarian debate, see 'New Testament Scholarship' 200 with n781 and 309 with n1291.

Father.[740] He imparts to them the Spirit that he shares with the Father, the Spirit that reconciles all things.[741]

He does not entrust to Peter the feeding of his sheep without Peter's triple confession of his love for Christ,[742] implying that a bishop should have no other aim than the welfare of the flock and the glory of Christ. And at once he shows to what end the true and faithful pastor should prepare himself, adding, 'Truly, I say to you, when you were young, you girded yourself and walked where you would; but when you are old, you will extend your hands, and another will carry you where you do not wish' [John 21:18]. For[743] one cannot be a true pastor whom financial gain, the pursuit of glory, the fear of princes or even of death diverts from duty.

It is in this way that it will be appropriate to philosophize over individual passages in the mystic volumes,[744] especially in the Gospels – for I have introduced the above only as examples to show the way to others who will perhaps find better examples than these.

But considerable difficulty lies in the very character of the speech in which sacred literature has been handed down to us. For Scripture generally speaks indirectly and under the cover of tropes and allegories, and of comparisons or parallels, sometimes to the point of obscurity in a riddle.[745] Perhaps Christ thought it fitting to reproduce the speech of the prophets to

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740 Cf John 15:4–5.

741 Cf John 20:21–3, 14:26; 2 Cor 5:18–19; also Col 1:20.

742 Cf John 21:15–17.

743 For ... duty.] Added in *1520*. A similar exposition concludes the paraphrase on John 21:17 CWE 46 224.

744 For 'mystic,' used of Scripture, see *Methodus* n19. Here the meaning of the expression 'to philosophize' (*philosophare*) has been amplified largely by the useful and practical application of Scripture, in the preceding discussion, to the life of the Christian individual and society. Just above (cf n736) Erasmus has spoken of the method in terms of typology. See, however, *Ratio* 555 with n336 and the references there. Erasmus will now proceed to discuss the literary modalities of Scripture. The *1519* text continues.

745 Erasmus describes the use, for rhetorical purposes, of comparisons and parallels in *De copia* CWE 24 616–26; for tropes, parallels, and allegories see further *Methodus* n42. For 'riddle' (*aenigma*) see CWE 43 161 n18, CWE 44 236 n15, and CWE 48 14 n38. For brief definitions see *Ecclesiastes* 3 CWE 68 930–4. For the figurative mode of speech in Scripture, especially in relation to the role of persona, see 523 with nn170, 171 above. For allegory see *Ratio* 661 with n906. In Ep 1333:39–46 Erasmus notes the difficulties created for the paraphrast by the figures of speech in the Gospels; for the difficulty biblical figures of speech created in the discussion with Luther see *Hyperaspistes* 2 CWE 77 447–88.

which Jewish ears had grown accustomed,[746] or he wanted to stimulate our sluggishness with this difficulty so that fruit sought with effort might later be more pleasing, or through this design he wanted his mysteries to be covered and concealed from the profane and the ungodly without at the same time cutting off hope of understanding from godly investigators.[747] Or perhaps he particularly liked the mode of expression that is most effectively persuasive and, likewise, accessible to learned and unlearned alike, and familiar and completely natural, especially if similitudes are drawn from things best known to the common crowd; we[748] read that Socratic comparisons were generally of this kind.

A parable is effectual, however, not only for teaching and persuading but also for stirring the emotions, for alluring with its charm,[749] for bringing clarity, for implanting one central idea deep within the mind, beyond the possibility of escape. The mind is quite extraordinarily moved by the parable that is introduced concerning the prodigal son, who came to his senses and repented.[750] In this parable the story is told of a young man who demands from his father the portion of wealth that was coming to him; then with self-confidence he boldly ventures into a country far off. Soon, forgetful of his most indulgent father, he squanders with harlots and spendthrifts the resources given to him by the kindness of a parent. Finally, compelled by his utter want of everything, he acknowledges at last his madness, and

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746 'Speech of the prophets,' ie figurative speech; cf eg Isa 5:1–7; Ezek 37:1–14; Daniel 7; Hosea 1–3.

747 This explanation for the obscurity in Scripture is repeated in *Hyperaspistes* 1 (1526) CWE 76 220, where it is identified (n675) as 'a commonplace argument in medieval and Renaissance defences of poetry.' Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 263 with n1096.

748 we read … kind.] In *1519* only; subsequently with a very small change, 'we read that Socratic comparisons generally were of this kind.' Cf eg in Plato's *Republic* the fable of the race generated in the womb of earth (allegory of the metals), the allegories of the line and the cave, and the myth of Er, respectively 414B–416B, 509D–511E, 514A–517E, and 614B–621B.

749 'For alluring with its charm': *ad delectandum*. The phrases recall the classical formulation of the primary goals of good oratory: to instruct, to move, and to delight (*docere, movere, delectare*); cf Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 3.5.2; 8.Pr 7. For these 'rhetorical offices' as benchmarks of good narrative see *Vita Hieronymi* CWE 61 58: 'Who instructs ...? Who delights ...? Who stirs the emotions more effectively?'; and for their significance in Erasmus' thought see Hoffmann *Rhetoric and Theology* 74–81.

750 Cf Luke 15:11–32.

a desire for the life he had left behind comes over him. The son returns, acknowledges his error; the father meets him, opens his arms to embrace his son. New clothes are brought out, a ring is offered, the fatted calf is killed, the whole house rings out with joy. In regaining the youth the old man rejoices as though the son had come to life again from the grave.[751] There is no reproach for the rashness of the young man in demanding, nor for his luxury and wickedness in spending. The father's devotion no longer remembers these things. For paternal devotion it is enough that the son has come to his senses and repented, that the son has been restored to him. These images, I say, strike the mind more sharply than if, without a parable, one should say that God willingly receives a sinner provided the sinner sincerely repents of his former life, and God does not hold the sin against one who profoundly hates his transgressions. Just[752] as this idea steals into the minds of hearers more effectively through the allurement of a similitude,[753] so it is etched more deeply when it is restated through the image of the wandering sheep that is brought back home on the shoulders of the shepherd after a long search – likewise, through the parable of the coin that is finally found after it had been so eagerly sought.[754]

Again, there is the mystic parable from Genesis: Abraham everywhere digs wells, the Philistines fill up the pits by throwing earth in them, Isaac digs the same wells again and adds several more besides that have veins of living water.[755] When you introduce this parable, will you not be heard with greater pleasure than if you should simply say that one must seek in the divine books instruction for good living – that those who are devoted to earthly

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751 from the grave.] Added in *1520*

752 Just ... sought.] Added in *1522*

753 'Of a similitude': *similitudinis*. In Erasmus' New Testament vocabulary *similitudo* appears to include various forms of 'likeness' and has been translated 'similitude' in CWE 45 (cf 213, 216), 'parallel,' 'metaphor' in CWE 46 (cf 13 n2, 129 n2, 176 n45), 'simile' in CWE 49 (cf 55–6, where 'parables' are said to be 'similes' [*similitudines*] drawn from things that are familiar to everyone). In *De copia* 'similitudes' are included as 'examples' along with 'parallels or comparisons, analogies, and anything else of the sort' (CWE 24 607), while 'simile' is abundantly exemplified (ibidem 641–4).

754 Cf Luke 15:3–7 (lost sheep) and 15:8–10 (lost coin). Erasmus has reversed the biblical order in this discussion, placing first the long parable (prodigal son), which is followed by the two short parables.

755 Cf Gen 26:15–22.

goods have no taste for these?[756] Likewise, one who makes a bare statement of the virtues a bishop should possess will receive a less receptive hearing than if he applies as an allegory Aaron's entire vestments, most carefully described by Moses.[757]

In the same way,[758] suppose you explain that a person's desire entices to sin when the opportunity arises; that unless reason rules, obeying the divine will rather than human affection,[759] a brief pleasure is purchased with death; that often, moreover, affection steals in under the cloak of necessity or some other honourable reason and deceives. This statement will delight or affect the hearer less than if you introduce[760] the story of Genesis: God commands, the serpent sets the trap, Eve entices her husband to share her sin, soon punishment becomes the companion of the pleasure tasted.[761]

In addition, if someone should explain that one must with one's whole heart abandon vices and withdraw from association with the wicked, and must always progress towards the better things, until one has attained the reward promised to those who have persevered to the end, he will more forcibly move his hearers if he applies the allegory of the Hebrews who fled from Egypt under Moses' leadership, set themselves free from a harsh and base servitude, and after crossing the sea, made their way through various stages – like points of progress in practising the virtues – to a land flowing with milk and honey.[762] Again, one who teaches that true piety is a difficult

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756 Cf Origen *In Genesim homiliae*, where Isaac's wells are interpreted as the 'living word of God' (13.1.3), 'the mystical interpretation of Scripture' (13.2.4), and 'heavenly as opposed to carnal perceptions' (13.3–4). Isaac's well are the 'heavenly philosophy' and the 'authentic gospel' in Ep 916:254–61 (5 February 1519). Erasmus had also appealed to the image earlier in the letter to Paul Volz (14 August 1518), Ep 858:191–224.

757 Cf Exod 28:3–43 (the vestments). Origen *In Exodum homiliae* 9.4 offers an allegorical interpretation of the dress as priestly virtues.

758 In the same way ... shown by some examples] This addition, extending just beyond this and the next two paragraphs, appeared first in *1520*; cf n765 below. Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 188 #5, where three major areas of additions to the *Ratio* are identified, all made in *1520*, as they appear from here to the end of the work.

759 For *affectus* 'affection' in Erasmus' New Testament scholarship see *Ratio* 628 with n719.

760 you introduce] First in *1523;* in *1520* and *1522*, 'he introduces'

761 Cf Genesis 2–3.

762 'A land flowing with milk and honey' is a frequent designation in the Hexateuch for Canaan; cf eg Exod 3:8, 17; Lev 20:24; Num 14:8; Deut 6:3; Josh 5:6. For the progress 'through various stages' (*per varias mansiones*) see Exod 17:1 and the Vulgate expression there, *per mansiones suas* (Weber 100).

thing and does not fall to the listless, but is scarcely acquired even with much industry and much struggle, will add much charm if he will adapt to allegory the battles and the uprisings that the Hebrews had against the Jebusites, the Philistines, and the other barbarian enemies.[763]

In addition, if you state in a straightforward way that nothing is more peaceful, nothing more pleasant than a good conscience that evil passions no longer molest, the auditor will be sleepier than if you add the wrapping of allegory: Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah only when Abraham's body was dead and it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.[764]

However, it will not be the task of one who is writing a compendium to recount all these stories from the books of the Old Testament. It is enough to have shown by some examples that there are[765] things that appear in a more pleasing way through crystal or amber than if they are looked upon alone and bare. And somehow sacred things have more majesty if they are brought before the eyes under a cover than if they are seen absolutely bare. Thus[766] truth that has tormented us first under cover of a riddle[767] is more pleasing once grasped – we who are the animal that walks first on four feet, then two, finally three.[768] Now if someone should say that any good that dwells in us comes to us from Christ, its author,[769] he will be understood, it is true; but if he will apply to this same thought the similitudes of the vine stock and the

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763 For the battles against the Jebusites and 'other barbarians' see eg Josh 11:1–15; 2 Sam 5:6–9; and 1 Kings 9:20–1, where the Jebusites are mentioned; the story of the battles with the Philistines is told in the books of Judges to 2 Chronicles.

764 Cf Gen 18:11; Rom 4:19. The language here reflects the Vulgate: 'body was dead' (Rom 4:19 AV) and 'after the manner of women' (Gen 18:11 AV).

765 that there are] From *1520*; in *1519*, 'there are,' appropriately, as following the text before the 1520 insertion; cf n758 above.

766 Thus ... three.] Added in *1520*

767 'Under cover of a riddle': *aenigmatis involucro*; cf just above 'the wrapping of allegory' (*allegoriae involucrum*) and CWE 43 161 with n18 'veil of mystery.' Cf also *Parabolae*: '… in the inner hive [bees] store up the sweetest thing there is. In like manner theology conceals her wisdom under layers of tasteless allegory to keep outsiders away' CWE 23 260. Cf *Ratio* nn745 and 789. Compare Erasmus' favourable attitude here to the obscurity of Scripture with his approach in his discussions with his opponents; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 263–4 (Luther), 270–1 (Béda), and 274–6 (Cousturier).

768 An allusion to the famous riddle of the Sphinx: what is it that walks on four legs, then on two, finally on three? In Greek legend the riddle, to which the answer is 'man,' was solved by Oedipus; cf Sophocles *King Oedipus* 390–8, especially 393 where *αἴνιγμα* designates 'riddle.'

769 For the expression and thought see Rom 7:18, 8:9–11; James 1:17.

vine branches, of head and members, of root and branches, the idea is at once placed before the eyes as though portrayed in a picture.[770]

Moreover,[771] just as Christ imitated the speech of the prophets, so Paul and the other apostles reflect the speech of Christ, projecting a theme visually, through parables, and, by frequent repetition, fastening it upon the mind. Thus Paul repeatedly calls us temples dedicated to God and temples of the Holy Spirit, which it is forbidden to desecrate.[772] Thus also he concludes that whole discussion about the rejection of Israel and the adoption of the gentiles with the parable of the olive tree and the wild olive, the root and the branches.[773] He calls 'leaven' the doctrine that, once handed down, influences[774] many, indicating the large number by the term 'dough'; he calls those who are sound 'unleavened,' the corrupt, 'leavened.' He says that those who are of a strong and resolute mind 'stand,' those who vacillate or sin 'fall,' those who are dead 'have fallen asleep,' or those who neglect their salvation 'sleep,' those who come to their senses and repent 'are awakened,' those who engage in the work of salvation eagerly and attentively 'keep watch.'[775] He

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770 Cf John 15:1–10 (vine and branches); Eph 4:15–16, 1 Cor 12:12–27 (head and members); Rom 11:16–24 (root and branches). At numerous points Erasmus reveals his predilection for pictorial representation enabling the visualization of ideas and abstract truths. In the *De copia* such representation is a means for creating 'vividness' – 'setting out the subject … so that we seem to have painted the scene rather than described it' CWE 24 577. He prefers an interpretation of Gal 3:1 that assumes that Christ was portrayed crucified before the eyes of the Galatians; annotation on Gal 3:1 (*ante quorum oculos*) ASD VI-9 100:689–93 and its paraphrase, CWE 42 108. Cf above: in the story of Abraham 'a pattern is set before our eyes,' *Ratio* 507 with n85.

771 Moreover ... course begun] Added in *1520*; for the resumption of the *1519* text cf n788.

772 Cf 1 Cor 3:16–17, 6:19; 2 Cor 6:16.

773 For the discussion see Rom 9:1–11:24; for the images of the olive tree and the wild olive, and of the root and the branch, Rom 11:16–24.

774 influences] Latin *afficiat*, as in the paraphrase on 1 Cor 5:7; first in *1522*; in *1520*, *inficiat* 'imbues,' 'infects.' 'Once handed down': *semel tradita*, an expression that echoes the Vulgate of Jude 3 'the faith once handed down.' But the reference to 1 Cor 5:6–8 may be confused with the similar expression in Gal 5:9, where the paraphrase interprets the 'yeast' as the teaching of the Judaizers. However, in the annotation on Gal 5:9 (*totam massam corrumpit*) Erasmus recalls (*1535*) the reference to 'leaven' in Matt 13:33, where 'yeast' is equated with the teaching of Christ, CWE 45 214.

775 Cf Rom 14:4, 1 Cor 10:12 (stand, fall); 1 Cor 15:18, 1 Thess 4:13, 14, 15 ('have fallen asleep' [*dormisse*]); 1 Thess 5:6 ('sleep' [*dormire*]); Rom 13:11 ('are awakened' [*expergisci*]; cf the annotation on the verse ['to rise from sleep']; 1 Cor 16:13 ('keep watch' [*vigilare*]).

calls a life sunk in error and vice 'night,' an honourable and blameless life 'day.' Occasionally, he calls the Last Judgment a 'day'; he calls 'day' a full and unerring judgment, which sometimes the word 'fire' also designates – 'The fire will make manifest each person's work, of what sort it is.'[776] He calls the gifts of the Holy Spirit 'treasures,' our bodies, or rather ourselves, 'earthen vessels.'[777] He calls the human race a 'lump,' God a 'potter.' He says that the godly are vessels destined for honourable uses; the ungodly, he says, are vessels prepared for dishonour.[778] He calls the frail body of a human being sometimes a 'dwelling,' sometimes a 'garment,' sometimes a 'tabernacle.'[779]

Through the similitude of the pedagogue and the young heir he shows that the Mosaic law was handed down for a limited time.[780] He calls a kindness invested a 'sowing,' and the returns gained from a kind deed done he calls a 'harvest.'[781] He commends concord at one point under the figure of the body and its members, at another, under that of a building well-constructed through a tightly fitting arrangement of stones in equilibrium right to the

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776 'Night' and 'day' serve as metaphors of contrasting conduct in Rom 13:12–14; 1 Thess 5:5–8. 'Day' refers to the Last Judgment in Rom 2:5, 16; 2 Tim 1:12, 18 and 4:8. Erasmus cites the last part of 1 Cor 3:13, but in the full verse both 'day' and 'fire' appear as images of judgment; cf 'The work of each builder will become visible for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each has done' (NRSV). In an annotation (extended further in each edition) on 1 Cor 3:12 (*foenum, stipulam*) Erasmus explains the figurative interpretation of the word 'fire' in distinction from the interpretation of those who think the fire is the fire of purgatory or the eternal punishment of sinners. In the paraphrase on the verse the fire is the 'storm winds' of persecutions or the goads of passion that test the work or the teaching of Christians; cf CWE 43 57–8 with n25. In *Responsio ad annotationes Lei* 2 (Note 160), answering Lee's criticism of the annotation, Erasmus interprets 'fire' as the 'shame felt by the person who is refuted and abandons his false teaching,' CWE 72 279. Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 367 with n1591 and the reference there to 'Errors in the Vulgate.'

777 A reference apparently to 2 Cor 4:7

778 Cf Rom 9:21–3, but the expression 'vessels for honour and dishonour' is also found in 2 Tim 2:20–1. 'Lump': *massa*, for the Greek *φύραμα* in Rom 9:21 (both VG and ER), but elsewhere Erasmus preferred *conspersio* 'paste,' 'dough,' as in his translation of 1 Cor 5:6 and Gal 5:9; cf the annotation on Gal 5:9 (*totam massam corrumpit*).

779 Cf 2 Cor 5:1–4. 'Garment': *vestem*, implied in the verbs of 5:2–4 'to be clothed'; cf RSV.

780 Cf Gal 3:23–9; and the paraphrase on these verses, CWE 42 113–14.

781 Cf 2 Cor 9:6.

gable that provides their common peak.[782] Whatever in anything is courser he calls 'flesh,' 'body,' or 'letter'; whatever is finer and is more like the force of the intellect he terms 'spirit' or 'mind.'[783] He says that the teaching adapted to the capacity of the weak is 'milk,' the more complete teaching is 'solid food.'[784] In more than merely one place he shows through the parallel of marriage and its dissolution that the Mosaic law has been rendered of no effect since evangelical doctrine has succeeded to it.[785] In the fifteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians he treats the whole matter of the resurrection not by Aristotelian or Platonic enthymemes but by comparisons, likening a body buried in the ground to a seed, citing wheat that has sprouted or a tree that has sprung up as an image of the glorified body.[786] Now it would be superfluous to recount the times he introduces a similitude from athletes and soldiers, from stadiums, boxers, war.[787] In the ninth chapter of the same Epistle, with how many comparisons does he insistently repeat the same idea, that thanks is owed for a kindness provided: 'Who serves as a soldier at any time at his own charge? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of the fruit thereof? Who feeds a flock and does not take the flock's milk?' [1 Corinthians 9:7]. Likewise, 'You will not muzzle the mouth of an

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782 Cf 1 Cor 12:12 (the body); Eph 2:14–22 (the building).

783 Cf Rom 6:6, 7:24, 8:13 (body); Rom 7:25 and 8:3–4, 1 Cor 3:3 (flesh); 2 Cor 3:6 (letter); Romans 8 passim and 2 Cor 3:6 (spirit); Rom 11:34 and 12:2, 1 Cor 2:16 (mind – *mens* in ER, as also here in the *Ratio*). 'Coarser' translates *crassius*; cf *Ratio* 534 with n229. For the contrast between body and spirit in terms of 'coarse,' 'weighty' and 'light,' 'agile' see eg *Enchiridion* CWE 66 41–52 and the paraphrases on Rom 7:17 and 8:22.

784 Cf 1 Cor 3:2; and Erasmus' paraphrastic interpretation of this passage, CWE 43 50–1 with nn2 and 3.

785 Rom 7:1–4 seems to be the only passage in the Pauline corpus where the marriage-dissolution comparison illustrates the relationship of the old and new covenants. In 1 Corinthians 7, however, Paul discusses at length marriage and Christian terms for its dissolution; cf especially 1 Cor 7:39. Cf also Gal 4:21–31, where Hagar and Sarah and their children are allegorized as the two covenants, and Scripture is cited that demands Hagar and her son be cast out.

786 Cf 1 Cor 15:35–44, especially 37: '[You sow] a bare kernel perhaps of wheat or of some other grain' (RSV). So too in his paraphrase on 15:37 Erasmus interprets the 'other grain' as a grain that produces a large tree, and he enhances the image with attractive rhetoric: 'How broad the spread of its branches, what pageantry in its leaves, what loveliness in its blossoms …' CWE 43 186. On the enthymeme see *Ratio* 569 with n418.

787 Cf eg 1 Cor 9:24–6 (athlete, stadium [translated 'race' DV, RSV], boxer); 1 Cor 9:7 (soldier); Eph 6:12–17 (war); and 2 Tim 2:4–5 (athlete, soldier).

ox that treads out the grain' [1 Corinthians 9:9]. Again: 'If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great matter if we reap your carnal things?' [1 Corinthians 9:11]. And again, 'Do you not know that those who work in the holy place have their food from the holy place, and those who attend at the altar partake of the sacrifices?' [1 Corinthians 9:13].

But perhaps we are pursuing this at greater length than an account of method warrants. Accordingly, to finish the course begun: Christ[788] sometimes deceives his disciples temporarily through riddles of an allegorical nature[789] so that what he wanted them to understand would stick more deeply later on. For example, in the sixteenth chapter of Matthew, when Christ warns the disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, it is the loaves they had forgotten that come to their minds, though he was speaking about avoiding the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.[790] Again, in Luke he bids them sell their tunics and buy a sword; they reply that two swords are at hand, and he says, 'It is enough.' When the opportunity arose, the words added incentive to Peter to set about the matter with a sword, though Christ was trying to pluck out of their hearts from its very deepest roots this desire to protect themselves by force against their persecutors.[791] Likewise, when in John he speaks to those who were admiring the great edifice of the temple and says, 'Destroy this temple and within a space of three days I will raise it up' [2:19], not even the apostles perceived that he was speaking about his body that was to be killed and that would live again within a period of three days.[792] In addition, when in the same Gospel he says, 'A little while and you will not see me, and again a little while, and you will see me' [John 16:16], he signified as

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788 Christ] First in *1520*; previously, 'Indeed, Christ,' continuing the discussion preceding the *1520* addition, for which see n771.

789 'Riddles of an allegorical nature': *allegoriarum aenigmatibus*; cf *Ratio* n767.

790 Cf Matt 16:5–12. Hoffman finds in the representation of Jesus' dissimulation a pedagogical intent; *Rhetoric and Theology* 122–5.

791 Cf Luke 22:36–8, 49–51; and for the identification of Peter as the swordsman, John 18:10. The paraphrase on this Lukan passage reflects the disciples' incomprehension of the riddle: 'Jesus left [them] in this very dull-witted state for the time being' CWE 48 197. The Lukan text (22:36–8) was cited earlier as an example of a biblical problem; cf *Ratio* 494 with n28; cf also *Methodus* n103. It is listed among the 'Obscure Passages' (#8) in 'Errors in the Vulgate' 890.

792 That Jesus was addressing those who were admiring the temple is a detail taken from the synoptic Gospels, where the destruction of the temple is foretold; cf Matt 24:1–2; Mark 13:1–2; Luke 21:5–6; cf *Ratio* 631 with n734. In the paraphrase on John 2:19–22 Jesus did not 'uncover' the 'hidden meaning of his remark,' but 'it stayed fixed like a seed in the hearts of the listeners,' CWE 46 43.

though with a riddle that he would shortly die but would soon show himself to them from the resurrection right to the day of the Ascension.

Thus,[793] by whatever design, it pleased the eternal wisdom both to insinuate itself into the minds of the godly, and, if I may use the expression, to deceive the minds of the profane through images sketched in outline only. For how many centuries do the Hebrews await their Messiah, the one so often promised? But what were the common crowd expecting? Some extraordinary ruler who would far extend the confines of their dominion, who would restore the Jews to liberty, who would bless their race with riches, who would with fire and sword lay waste the nations that were strangers to the law of Moses. But how vain and deluded was their expectation! Christ came, an example of lowliness and poverty; he came teaching that absolute power of a worldly sort was to be despised; he came exhorting us to take up the cross, and he himself led the way.[794] Accordingly, when he came, they turned away from him with a hatred that matched the zeal with which they had awaited his coming, deluded as they were by the fanciful images of their dull minds. But[795] in Matthew, with how many parables does he sketch out for us the kingdom of heaven: the sower whose seed fell on different kinds of soil, then the sower of good seed, the grain of mustard, the little bit of leaven hidden in a large quantity of flour, the treasure buried in a field, the exceptional pearl.[796]

One could put in the same class the practice of Paul, a man who always imitates Christ: he refers everything from its normal meaning to its inner meaning, which is always the sense that is truest, and also the most salutary and of the most extensive application.[797] According to the general opinion, a Jew is one who has a little bit of foreskin cut off. According to Paul's interpretation, a Jew is a person who has a mind cleansed from earthly desires,

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793 Thus ... many examples.] This paragraph and the next two, along with the first sentence of the third, were added in *1520* with the exceptions noted (cf nn795, 803, 805). For the continuation of the text in *1519* cf n809.

794 Cf eg Matt 20:25–8, Mark 10:42–5 (despising power); Matt 10:38 and 16:24, Mark 8:34, Luke 9:23 (taking up the cross).

795 But ... pearl.] This sentence appeared already in *1519*, following the last sentence of the previous paragraph. Cf n793.

796 These parables are all found in Matt 13:3–45, in the sequence given here.

797 Cf *Enchiridion* CWE 66 34, where Paul is listed first among those 'who depart as much as possible from the literal sense'; also Ep 980:46–7. For Paul as imitator of Christ see 1 Cor 11:1; and *Ratio* 612 with n644.

while the uncircumcised is one who is led by base affections.[798] In the popular view the children of Abraham are those whose stock derives from Abraham. According to Christ and Paul, the children of Abraham are those who in their moral life reflect the godliness and the trust of Abraham.[799] Likewise, one who belongs to the race of Israel is called an Israelite; to Christ he is not an Israelite unless he is related to God through innocence of life.[800] When someone has kept the rules prescribed by the laws, this is commonly called 'righteousness.' With God it is not righteousness unless sincerity and purity of mind make the observance of the Law praiseworthy in the eyes of the one who looks deep within the innermost recesses of the heart.[801]

One who killed a sacrificial animal or, as is done today, one who has consecrated the Eucharist is said to have offered a sacrifice. But it is the one who suppresses and slays anger, lust, ambition, and other similar beastly desires that truly sacrifices to God.[802] A building dedicated with the words of priests and with oil is said to be a temple dedicated to God; the mind[803] that bears the image of God and admits no likeness of turpitude is a truly

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798 Cf Rom 2:28–9; and Erasmus' paraphrase on the verse, CWE 42:21–2. 'Base': *crassis*.

799 Cf John 8:39; Gal 3:6–7. For this characterization of 'children,' to which Erasmus frequently recurs, see *Ratio* 584 with n506.

800 Cf John 1:47 in the paraphrase on which Nathanael is defined as a true Israelite in comparison with false Israelites, CWE 46 36; in the paraphrase on Mark 7:24–30 the Canaanite (Syrophoenician) woman acquires a place among the sons of Israel, CWE 49 93–4.

801 Cf 1 Sam 16:7; and the allusion to it in the paraphrase on Acts 15:8 CWE 50 96–7; also Jer 11:20, 17:10, 20:12. The paraphrase on Rom 12:1–2 offers a broad exposition of this theme, CWE 42 69. The definition of *iustitia* 'righteousness' here, effectively articulated by the contrasting formulae, may recall the paraphrase on Luke 1:6, where the paraphrast attributes to Zechariah and Elizabeth both kinds of 'righteousness': they 'wholeheartedly observed everything that the Lord had instructed in the Law' and 'commended themselves by the purity of their lives even to the eyes of God' CWE 47 27. Cf the annotation on Matt 1:19 (*cum esset vir iustus*), where Erasmus notes that Joseph was *iustus* 'righteous' because, although he disobeyed the law, he possessed not merely one of the four Aristotelian virtues but an absolute *probitas* 'integrity'; cf CWE 44 xvii.

802 For this commonplace interpretation of 'sacrifice' see the paraphrases on Rom 12:1–2 CWE 42 69 and the annotation on Rom 12:1 ('reasonable service'); also *Enchiridion* CWE 66 71.

803 the mind … within.] First in *1522*; in *1520*: 'the mind that inwardly bears the image of God … a truly sacred temple.' Cf 1 Cor 3:16–17; 2 Cor 6:16; and *Ratio* n772 (temple metaphor). Erasmus commonly uses *templum* 'temple' with the sense of a 'church building'; cf CWE 50 26 n5. For the rites and materials used in the

sacred temple within. To burn incense before some profane statue is commonly defined as idolatry; true idolatry is to defy Christ because of foul lust, base gain, desire for revenge, tyrannical power. Those who have deserted to the side of the Turks[804] are said to be apostates; true apostates are those whose lives are in conflict with Christ and are enslaved to the world, and[805] inconsistent with their baptismal profession. When someone spews out impious words against God, this is generally said to be blasphemy; but Paul, following the thought of the prophet, calls it blasphemy whenever the name of God is dishonoured because of the ungodly lives of those who profess the worship of God.[806] For why should we scruple to say that God is defamed by the evil practices of Christians, when in the Gospel the Father is said to be glorified by the good works of disciples?[807] By the same reasoning it could be said that in the popular judgment those are called monks who profess themselves to be such by a specified kind of dress and food and established ceremonies, though in God's eyes he only is a monk whose mind is plainly dead to worldly desires.[808]

But I think I have sufficiently indicated with a few examples this method, too, since each person can with a little thought supply for himself many examples. Closely[809] allied and akin to these are proverbs; to this class be-

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consecration of a church see ODCC 465 'Dedication of churches.' On the word *animus* 'mind' see CWE 43 188–9 with n63 and 195 with n9, and for the mind as stamped with the image of God, *Ratio* 630 with n729.

804 For the menace of the Turks see *Ratio* 579 with n476. The statement recognizes that some Christians converted to Islam; cf *De bello Turcico* CWE 64 258: 'Should anyone deny the name of Christ he may end up as a pasha.' More characteristically Erasmus speaks of the conversion of Muslims to Christianity; cf ibidem 242, 265.

805 and ... profession.] Added in *1522*. Throughout his writings Erasmus repeatedly undertakes to define the word 'world'; cf CWE 43 370 n7 and, in addition to the references given there, *Enchiridion* CWE 66 101, *In psalmum 2* CWE 63 99, the paraphrase on James 4:6–9 CWE 44 162, *Purgatio adversus epistolam Lutheri* CWE 78 452–3, and the annotation on Gal 4:3 (*sub elementis mundi eramus servientes*) (*1519*): 'By "world" Paul is referring to whatever is visible and transitory; among such things is the scrupulous regard for ceremonies' ASD VI-9 120:973–4. Cf *Ratio* 679 with n996.

806 Cf Rom 2:23–4; and the annotation on Rom 2:24 ('is blasphemed'), where Erasmus interpets blasphemy as he does here.

807 Cf Matt 5:16.

808 Cf *De contemptu mundi* CWE 66 174: 'Whoever is a true Christian is monk enough'; cf *Ratio* 679 with n998.

809 The text of *1519* resumes here; cf n793.

longs the following: We piped to you and you did not dance, we wailed and you did not weep' [Luke 7:32]. This means that the Pharisees were not aroused to repentance by the austerity of John or by the civility of Christ.

There are, however, tropes that belong not to the domain of grammarians or rhetoricians but to the idiomatic character of speech; if an idiom is misunderstood, the reader will frequently either be deceived or delayed.[810] The Greek language has, in fact, many idiomatic expressions in common with Latin, some peculiar to itself. But Hebrew has many forms of expression different from both. We use the same idiom as the Greeks when we say that one who 'deserves well of another' 'does a kindness.' But we do not share in common with them the fact that their expression *εὐπαθεῖν*, that is, 'to be fortunate' [*bene pati*] is used idiomatically[811] to mean 'to receive a kindness' [*beneficio affici*].[812] We share with them[813] a common idiom for 'I am grateful' *habeo gratiam*, *ἔχω χάριν* [literally, I have thanks]; we do not share with them an idiom that expresses the same idea, *οἶδα χάριν*, literally, 'I know thanks,' nor[814] do we share with them the idiom *μεμνήσωμαι χάριν*, literally, 'I will remember thanks,' which expresses the same idea as the Latin idiom *referam gratiam* [I will return a favour].[815] For 'one who has unknowingly welcomed angels as his guests'[816] the correct expression in Greek is *ἔλαθεν ξενίσας ἀγγέλους*, but in Latin we do not say, 'It escaped his notice receiving angels.'[817]

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810 From antiquity, grammarians were teachers of literature at an elementary stage, while rhetoricians taught effective expression to students at a more advanced stage. For tropes as taught by Quintilian see *Methodus* n42. In his *Annotations* Erasmus frequently notes the special idioms of both Greek and Hebrew; cf CWE 56 General Index sv 'idiom.'

811 idiomatically] *eo quod est*; added in *1522*

812 Ie, whereas the word *εὐπαθεῖν* is used in Greek to mean both 'to be fortunate' and 'to receive a kindness,' Latin speakers wishing to express the latter idea would use not *bene pati*, literally 'suffer well' (the literal equivalent of the Greek), but *beneficio affici* (as here).

813 with them] In all editions except *Froben 1519*, which read 'with the Greeks'

814 nor ... receiving angels.'] Added in *1520*

815 For the characteristic sense of the Greek examples see the annotation on Rom 1:5 ('grace and apostleship').

816 as his guests'] Added in *1522*

817 'It escaped his notice receiving angels': *latuit accipiens angelos*, a reference to Heb 13:2, where the Greek verb is plural. Erasmus' Latin expression here represents his own translation (with Greek plural converted to Latin singular), *qui insciens accepit angelos hospitio* 'who unknowingly received angels as his guests.' Cf NRSV, 'Some have entertained angels without knowing it.' In an annotation

Now, although the apostles wrote in Greek, they retain in no small measure the idiom of Hebrew speech. Moreover, the Seventy who gave us the Old Testament in Greek retain a great many of the idioms of Hebrew speech. These were generally changed by Jerome, who did away with the old translation that Augustine cites in his work *Modes of Expression* (if anyone would like to sample that translation).[818] As a result of the Hebrew idioms in the Septuagint, one who has little proficiency in Hebrew, even if very skilled in Greek, sometimes does not follow the thought of the speaker.[819] Let me produce one or two examples of this kind for the sake of illustration: 'who swears in heaven' for the expression 'he swears by heaven'; and 'he believes in him' for the expression 'he trusts in him'; 'he confesses in him' for 'he

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on the verse (*placuerunt quidem etc*) that was extended further in every edition, Erasmus showed how the Greek idiom has presented difficulties to Latin readers who did not recognize the idiom, and he defended his own interpretation.

818 In his *In Heptateuchum locutiones* Augustine discussed expressions in a Latin Bible then in use, 'the old translation' (cf n828 below). In a *1522* addition to the annotation on Acts 1:26 (*et innumeratus est*) Erasmus himself found an occasion to give a sample of an 'old translation' by citing a lengthy passage from a Bible quoted by Augustine. Cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei* 2 (Note 115) CWE 72 247–8 with n40 and 'New Testament Scholarship' 208 with n806.

819 According to a tradition embodied in our literary sources, first in the *Letter of Aristeas* (c 130 BC) and followed by numerous later authors, both Jewish and Christian (cf Josephus *Jewish Antiquities* 12.12–118, Tertullian *Apologeticus* 19–20), Ptolemy II Philadelphus (308–246 BC) commissioned seventy-two Jewish elders to translate the Pentateuch into Greek. This translation (and by extension the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures in general) became known as the Septuagint from the number of translators (Latin *septuaginta* 'seventy'). In fact the Septuagint had a more complex origin than the tradition allowed (cf ABD V 1093–1104 'Septuagint'). Translations based on the Greek versions provided Latin texts of the Bible (referred to in general as the *vetus Latina* 'Old Latin version'), which appear to have existed from at least the middle of the second century. It was the Old Latin version of the Gospels that Jerome revised at the request of Pope Damasus; in the case of the Old Testament, however, after an initial and unsatisfactory attempt to provide a translation (perhaps based on the *vetus Latina*) according to the Septuagint, Jerome made his own translations from the Hebrew. Though Augustine seems to have used Jerome's revision of the Gospels, for the Old Testament he preferred the Old Latin version based on the Septuagint. Differences between the Vulgate and the Latin cited in Augustine's *In Heptateuchum locutiones* are readily apparent. See CHB I 513–21 for Jerome; and for Augustine ibidem 544–6 and Fitzgerald *Augustine* 99–103, especially 101; also for the Old Latin translations, NCE 14 591 'Vulgate.'

confesses' or 'he acknowledges[820] him'; 'in this they will know,' 'he struck in the sword' – 'by this they will know,' 'he struck with the sword'; 'I will be to him unto a father, he will be to me unto a son' – 'I will be his father, he will be my son'; 'two and two' for 'two by two,' 'more stronger than we' – 'stronger than we'; 'if a woman will be to a foreign husband' for the expression 'if she marries a foreign husband'; 'man man' for 'whoever'; 'of a man of a man' for[821] 'of any man at all'; 'what things he did [to] their force' for 'what he did to their armies' – Augustine thought this was a Hebrew idiom, though I think it is Greek.[822] Hebrew idiom adds a superfluous pronoun: 'Blessed is the people whose God is the Lord of it' [Psalm 144:15].[823] Also, 'he showed' for 'he made' [or 'he did']; 'good good' for 'exceedingly good'; 'Mary of Cleopas' for 'Mary, wife of Cleopas'; 'James of Alphaeus' – 'James son of Alphaeus' is an ellipsis familiar in Hebrew. Likewise, 'all flesh' for 'all people,' 'many souls' for 'many persons,' 'word' for 'deed' – 'What is this word you have done to us?'[824] – 'honour' for 'assistance,' 'mercy' for

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820 or 'he acknowledges] Added in *1520*

821 for] First in *Schoeffer 1519*

822 The following are examples of expressions found in the Greek texts (LXX and New Testament), most of which have been carried over into Latin (Old Testament and New Testament Vulgate): 'swears in' Matt 23:22, 1 Sam 24:21 (24:22 LXX), cf the annotation on Matt 5:34 (*neque per coelum*); 'believes in' 2 Chron 20:20, Eph 1:13; 'confesses in' Luke 12:8, cf the annotation on the verse (*confessus fuerit me*); 'in this shall know' John 13:35; 'struck in' Luke 22:49, cf Josh 10:32, 35, 37, 39; on the use of *in* for *per* see the numerous examples cited in the General Index to CWE 56 sv 'grammar – prepositions: *ἐν*'; 'father-son' 2 Sam 7:14, 1 Chron 28:6, 2 Cor 6:18; 'two and two' Gen 7:9, cf the annotation on Mark 6:7 (*binos*); 'more stronger' cf Num 13:31 as cited by Augustine *In Heptateuchum locutiones* PL 34 524; 'to a foreign husband' Lev 22:12 as cited by Augustine *In Heptateuchum locutiones* PL 34 521, cf the annotation on Rom 7:3 CWE 56 185 ('if she is with another husband'); 'man man' and 'of a man of a man' cf Ezek 14:4, 7 and for similar expressions see the annotations on Rom 8:15 ('Abba, Father'), Matt 7:21 (*domine, domine*), Heb 10:37 (*adhuc enim modicum aliquantulum*), and *De immensa Dei misericordia* CWE 70 88–9; 'what things ... he did [to] their force (double accusative in Deut 11:3–4 LXX, accusative and dative in VG), cf Augustine *In Heptateuchum locutiones* PL 34 533.

823 Erasmus cites the Vulgate according to the Septuagint, not according to the Hebrew. Jerome had made Latin (VG) versions of the Psalms from both languages. In the verse cited here the Vulgate carries the Greek construction over into the Latin.

824 to us?'] Added in *Froben 1519* and *Froben March 1520* only. The passage is cited from 2 Sam 1:4, reading in LXX 'What is this word,' in Vulg 'What is this word that has been done,' in NRSV 'How did things go?'

'kindness.'[825] Moreover, the translator is confronted with the same situation in rendering Greek idioms as in translating Hebrew idioms. But in the annotations that I have written on the New Testament I have in scattered fashion[826] pointed out cases of this kind.[827] And Aurelius Augustine did likewise in his books with the title *Modes of Expression*.[828] And yet Augustine[829] could have occupied himself more profitably with this subject if in his annotations he had drawn from the Hebrew sources rather than the Greek.[830] There exist

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825 Examples from the Vulgate: 'he showed' John 10:32, Rom 2:15; 'good, good' Jer 24:3, cited in the annotation on Rom 8:15 ('Abba, Father'); 'Mary' John 19:25 and 'James' Matt 10:3, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:15, Acts 1:13, an idiom that created difficulty for Erasmus in the case of 'Judas of James,' cf CWE 50 9 n71, CWE 45 166 n6, and the epistolary exchange with Pelargus, 'New Testament Scholarship' 343 with n1475; 'all flesh,' frequent in both Testaments, cf eg Ps 145:21 (VG 144:21), Isa 40:5–6, Luke 3:6, John 17:2, Acts 2:17, 1 Pet 1:24; 'souls' cf eg Gen 46:26–7, Acts 2:41, 1 Pet 3:20; 'word-deed' cf preceding note; for the use of *honor* in place of *subsidium*, and of *misericordia* in place of *beneficentia*, see respectively the annotation on Rom 12:10 ('in honour mutually anticipating') and the note *misericordia pro beneficentia* found in the margin beside the annotation on Matt 9:13 (*misericordiam volo*) in all editions of the New Testament from 1519; cf Reeve-Screech 44.

826 in scattered fashion] Added in *1520*

827 For examples see the General Index to CWE 56 sv 'idiom.'

828 The full title: *In Heptateuchum locutionum libri septem* (*Seven Books of Modes of Expression in the Heptateuch*) PL 34 485. Cf Fitzgerald *Augustine* 505, where *locutiones* is translated as 'sayings.' Each 'book' is comprised of short notes on 'modes of expression' or 'sayings' in one of the first seven books of the Old Testament. For these notes as 'annotations' see 'New Testament Scholarship' 52 with n226.

829 Augustine] Rendering *ille*, added in *1520*

830 Athough Augustine introduces the *In Heptateuchum locutiones* as a study of Greek and Hebrew idioms, it is evident that in this work his point of reference was normally the Greek text of Scripture (cf PL 34 485 and 485–546 passim). Pierre Courcelle attempted to trace the slow development throughout Augustine's life of his knowledge of Greek; *Les lettres grecques en Occident: De Macrobe à Cassiodore* (Paris 1948) 135–53. According to Courcelle, it was only a few years before writing the *In Heptateuchum locutiones* (in 419) that Augustine set out to acquire a working knowledge of this language, and in the 420s he was still improving his skill, which never became more than bookish (cf *Methodus* n32). Courcelle supposes that Augustine's advocacy of Greek in the *De doctrina christiana* is the result of a late revision (1–3.25 dates from the mid-390s, the remainder from the late 420s); similarly Peter Brown *Augustine of Hippo* (Berkeley

also the annotations of the Greek writer Titanius, a modern author, as it appears, in this very genre. [831]

Now a problem is frequently solved through other kinds of tropes also. For example, Matthew and Mark reported that the robbers who were crucified with Christ reviled him, though Luke tells us that only one did so.[832] Augustine unravels the knot by saying that this is a case of *ἑτέρωσις*, a change of number, where 'robbers' is used for 'a robber.'[833] Again, he explains by synecdoche the statement that Christ was in the tomb for a period of three days, as also the passage written in Mark that he would rise again after three days, although he rose at daybreak on the third day.[834] How many times, moreover, do Chrysostom and Jerome and Augustine scatter the obscurity of meaning by unravelling the intricacies of a hyperbaton.[835] These[836] authors, I suppose, had not been read by a certain distinguished Scotist, who recently in a public assembly – and with the sharpest wit, as he thought – scoffed at people like me, who have laboured to show the order of words. He said, 'I learned to construe quite some time ago from Alexander, the grammarian.'[837]

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1967) 271 (cf *Methodus* n32). Cf the article '*Quaestiones in Heptateuchum*' in Fitzgerald *Augustine* 692–3 and the reference there to the *In Heptateuchum locutiones*.

831 'Modern author': *neoterici*; cf *Methodus* n29. There is no indication that Erasmus knew much about this author – this is the only reference cited in the indexes to LB. The Schoeffer 1519 edition printed the name *Titami*. I have not found the name in standard dictionaries or encyclopedias.

832 Cf Matt 27:44; Mark 15:32; Luke 23:39. On the exegetical tradition of confronting difficult problems see 'New Testament Scholarship' 54 with n234.

833 Cf Augustine *De consensu evangelistarum* 3.16.53. For *ἑτέρωσις* (*heterosis*) as a trope see *De copia* 1.13 CWE 24 321–4, also CWE 56 119 n10, and ASD IX-2 137:553n. Erasmus referred again to Augustine's solution in *Ecclesiastes* 3 CWE 68 890. Cf also the annotation on Matt 27:44 (*improperabant ei*).

834 Cf Augustine *De consensu evangelistarum* 3.24.66. For the scriptural references see Matt 12:40; Mark 8:31; but also Matt 16:21 'on the third day.' For synecdoche see *De copia* 1.23 CWE 24 341, also *Ecclesiastes* 3 CWE 68 891–4.

835 Erasmus frequently points to the hyperbata in Paul's speech in the Epistle to the Romans; for examples see the Subject Index to CWE 56 sv 'rhetoric: hyperbaton.' On the 'obscurity of Scripture,' see 'New Testament Scholarship' 263–75, 636 and n767, and the Translator's Note to 'Obscure Passages' in 'Errors in the Vulgate' 886.

836 These ... grammarian.'] Added in *1520*

837 Alexander de Villa Dei wrote a Latin grammar in verse, the *Doctrinale*, c 1200. He is cited with other despised medieval sources in *Antibarbari* CWE 23 36; cf Ep 31:43n. Although the identification of the Scotist to whom Erasmus refers cannot be made with certainty, it may be assumed that he is the Franciscan

Indeed, we frequently encounter hyperbole also, as in this passage: 'They mount up to heaven, they go down to the depths' [Psalm 107:26], where the psalmist wanted us to picture the violent surging of storm-driven waves.[838] A statement that goes beyond demonstrable reality is not necessarily a lie, but a trope is applied to make discourse more pungent and passionate. And no one should think it absurd to point out hyperboles in the divine books, for Origen does so, as does Chrysostom, and so do Augustine and Jerome.

The following are examples: 'It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven' [Matthew 19:24] – whereas Christ wanted only this to be understood: that it is extremely difficult for a rich man to obey gospel teaching.[839] Likewise, in Luke, when in the parable he asks that the disabled, blind, and lame be invited to a feast, all that is meant is that the unfortunate and the downcast should be supported by kindness freely given;[840] again, when he forbids the apostles to greet anyone on the way – whereas he wanted it understood that they must not act in such a manner that they delay the work of the gospel by losing any time due to human affections.[841] When he forbids them to take wallet or staff for the journey, he meant that they ought to be free from those supports that most people provide for themselves when they are about to go

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Henry Standish (cf CWE 68 896 n1007).The anecdote here recalls the portrait drawn not only in *Ecclesiastes* 3 just cited but elsewhere as well; cf eg Ep 337:709–18, *Adagia* II v 98, and the annotation on Jerome's 'Letter to Paulinus' ('his capture by pirates') CWE 61 217–18. The incident is recalled again in *Contra morosos* paragraph 82a with n216.

838 See Ps 107:23–7, where the context clarifies the image intended: men on a ship tossed by violent waves. In an annotation (added in *1519*) on Matt 5:39 (*praebe ei alteram*) Erasmus echoed the sentiment expressed here: he noted the hyperbole, which he exemplified by citing, as here, Ps 107:26 and observed, 'We must not straightaway count as a lie any statement that contains hyperbole'; he then went on to validate his point by appealing to the exegetical practice of Origen, Jerome, Chrysostom, and Augustine; for the citation see ASD VI-5 146:856–7. For hyperbole see *De copia* 1.28 and 1.46 CWE 24 344 and 385; also *Ecclesiastes* 3, where the Fathers mentioned here in the *Ratio* and likewise in the annotation on Matthew 5:39 are all shown to have explained certain passages in Scripture by appealing to the figure of hyperbole, CWE 68 828–34.

839 Cf the paraphrase on Luke 16:9 CWE 48 92, where the Lord (in his paraphrastic persona) asserts that riches are scarcely ever won justly (*sine fraude*).

840 Cf Luke 14:12–14.

841 Cf Luke 10:4; cf *Ratio* 595 with n561.

on a journey.[842] For there is no doubt that the apostles had wallets and staves, since Paul left both a cloak and a library at Troas.[843] When he bids his disciples to live in the manner of lilies, he wanted them to realize that they ought to cast off the anxious concern to lay away provisions for the future.[844] When he bids them to offer the left cheek to one who strikes on the right, what else does he mean except that an injury inflicted should not be returned.[845] We must hold the same view, I think, about the tunic that was to be left with one who took away the cloak, and about walking of their own accord the second mile with the person who had compelled them to walk the first.[846] When he says that a person who does not hate father and mother is not his disciple,[847] he said more than he wanted inferred, for[848] he meant not that parents should be hated, but that all affections should take second place to the concern for godliness and salvation. When he bids us to anoint our faces with oil so that we do not appear to fast, he means only that we should not strive to be ostentatious in doing good deeds[849] – for I suppose that the apostles usually did not anoint their faces when they fasted.

Origen points out that there is a hyperbole in the text we read in Genesis: 'He washes his robe in wine and his cloak in the blood of grapes' [49:11].[850] For who washes his clothes in wine? But from these words he wanted us

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842 Cf Matt 10:10 and Luke 9:3, where both staff and wallet are forbidden (Luke 10:4 forbids only the wallet; Mark 6:8 permits a staff). Cf the annotation on Mark 6:9 (*calceatos sandaliis*), added in *1535*, where, after a lengthy discussion on the appeal to the literal interpretation of this dominical logion to justify monastic practice, Erasmus expresses his opinion that 'it is preferable to understand all of this as a trope,' an admonition to the apostles to be deterred by nothing from their evangelical mission, ASD VI-5 388:969. This interpretation is evident in the paraphrases on these passages; cf especially the paraphrase on Mark 6:9, where Erasmus allows himself a little excursus on Jesus' figurative manner of speaking, CWE 49 78. Cf 666 with n929.

843 Cf 2 Tim 4:13.

844 Cf Matt 6:28–33; Luke 12:26–31.

845 Cf Matt 5:39; and n838 above.

846 Cf Matt 5:40–1.

847 Cf Luke 14:26; cf Matt 10:37.

848 for ... salvation.] Added in *1520*

849 Cf Matt 6:17–18.

850 Cf Origen *In Genesim homiliae* 17.8. Homily 17 is the work not of Origen but of his translator Rufinus. It does not appear, therefore, in the modern translation by Ronald Heine of the *Homilies on Genesis and Exodus* FOTC 71 (Washington DC 1982); or in Louis Doutreleau ed *Homélies sur la Genèse / Origène* Sources chrétiennes 7 *bis* (Paris 1976); but for the citation see PG 12 260B.

to understand only the extraordinary and abundant fertility of the land. He also thinks that Paul's statement that the faith of the Romans is spoken of in the whole world is hyperbole,[851] since their faith was unknown to many regions. St Augustine, in the letter to Publicola (which is numbered among the others as the 154th), thinks there is hyperbole in those words of Christ by which he forbids us to swear at all, either by the heaven or by the earth or by anything else: he said more than he meant in order to deter us more forcibly from perjury. I shall add Augustine's words, in case anyone should ask for them: '[...] if, at least, this is still a concern for us that in the New Testament it is said that we should not swear at all. This, indeed, seems to me to have been said not because to swear to the truth is a sin, but because perjury is a monstrous sin, from which he who admonished us not to swear at all wanted us to keep far away.' So far Augustine.[852] Just as, when we use threats in forbidding children to swim, we say, 'If you so much as look at the pool, I'll kill you.' If we accept this interpretation, other passages also will be explained in a very similar way: 'Do not divorce your wife'; 'Do not resist evil'; 'Do not be angry.'[853] For[854] when Christ took completely away from his people the right of divorce, he is expressing with vehemence his intent that they should not divorce without just cause; when he says that they should not avenge themselves even when injured, he means that they should not even think of inflicting injury. When he expresses his desire that they should not become angry whatever the provocation, he means that there is no place for homicide, reproaches, or unjustified anger.[855]

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851 Cf Origen *Commentarius in epistolam ad Romanos* 1.9 (on Rom 1:8); also Erasmus' annotation on Rom 1:8 ('in the entire world'). This and the preceding passage from Genesis (n850) are both cited in *Ecclesiastes* 3 CWE 68 830, 833.

852 Cf Augustine Ep 47.2, commenting on Matt 5:34–6; in PL 33 184 *non* is read for *nos*, 'if, for all that, it is still not a concern that' etc.

853 Cf Matt 5:32, 39, 22 respectively.

854 For ... unjustified anger.] Added in *1520*

855 Cf the *1519* addition to the annotation on Matt 5:37 (*his abundantius est*): 'We can find a solution to the difficulty [of these radical statements] if we understand that Christ has not absolutely forbidden these actions, but has forbidden us to do them in the way they are commonly done.' In the same annotation Erasmus had said in *1516* that Christ had meant these injunctions 'for the perfect,' a sense that seems to be implied in his portrait of the ideal Christian community in *Methodus* 440–2 and carried over into *Ratio* 517–19. Erasmus' efforts to broaden the 'just causes' for divorce received much opposition; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 137–8 with appendix 3, 147–9; and for the significant addition

Now, Cyril and Chrysostom frankly admit that John's statement at the end of his Gospel – that the whole world could not contain the books that would have to be written about Christ – is hyperbole.[856] The[857] latter of these in his thirty-fifth homily on Matthew thinks a hyperbole underlies these words of Christ: 'What I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear in the ear, preach upon the housetops' [10:27]. For Christ did not say anything in clandestine encounters or in hushed voice, nor did the apostles ever[858] preach upon the housetops. But Christ characterizes what had been said to a few in Palestine as said in 'darkness' and in 'whispers,' in comparison with the light and the trumpet sound of the gospel, which, through the apostles, soon shone forth and rang out among all the nations of the world – among people of the most exalted rank and among the humblest. I think it is also hyperbole[859] when he forbids us to call anyone on earth 'father'; and again when he says that neither an iota nor even one little dot of the Law must be left unfulfilled,[860] meaning that not one of the divine promises is to pass away; they can stand even if dots have sometimes been removed. But in the annotations with which I have clarified the New Testament I have pointed out some examples of this type, too.[861]

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on the subject in the *Ratio* of 1523 see 543–6. As late as 1532 Johann Dietenberger published a refutation of Erasmus' *1519* annotation, to which Erasmus replied (1532) in *Responsio ad disputationem de divortio* CWE 83 152–77.

856 Cf John 21:25; Cyril of Alexandria *Expositio sive commentarius in Iohannis evangelium* 12 (on 21:25); and Chrysostom *In Ioannem evangelistam homiliae* 88.2, where hyperbole is inferred rather than 'frankly admitted'; also the *1516* annotation on John 21:25 (*nec ipsum arbitror mundum capere posse*), where Cyril and Chrysostom are likewise cited.

857 The ... the humblest.] Added in *1522*. For the allusion to Chrysostom see *In Matthaeum evangelistam homiliae* 34 al 35.2 (on 10:27).

858 ever] Added in *1522*

859 it is also hyperbole] Added in *1523;* previously the sentence began, 'I think also when …'

860 'Must be left unfulfilled': *omittendum qui non impleatur*. In spite of *iota* and *apiculum*, which are the neuter antecedents, the masculine *qui* evidently presupposes the Vulgate masculine noun *apex*.

861 It was in a *1519* addition to his annotation on Matt 5:18 (*iota unum aut apex*) that Erasmus first noted the hyperbole: 'I think this statement also was spoken in hyperbole ... he affirms that nothing at all has been promised or brought forth in the law of Moses that is not fulfilled in the gospel' ASD VI-5 136:636, 644–5. For the passages cited see Matt 23:9 ('call no one father') and Matt 5:18 ('iota'

There are expressions that are akin to these; whether they correspond to tropes, I do not know, but at least they must be brought in line with common sense rather than forced to the quick, as they say.[862] For example, when Christ forbids all swearing, he means that one must not swear as the ordinary person swore for any reason whatever.[863] When he forbids us to be concerned for the morrow,[864] he means 'after the manner of the ordinary person' who, as though distrusting God, was tormented with anxious concern for the future. When he forbids us to resist evil,[865] he means that evil must not be repelled with evil, as is usually done by the ordinary person; in any case, it is permitted to reprove sinners, it is also permitted to restrain them. When he forbids his disciples to be called 'Rabbi,'[866] he means not in the manner of the Pharisees, who were swollen with pride on account of this title. When he forbids verbosity in prayers,[867] he means that one must pray not after the example of those who supposed that God was moved by a multitude of words rather than by disposition of mind; in any case, we read that even Christ prayed at length.[868] In the same way, he bids us not to be angry,[869] meaning the ordinary anger that leads to violence. In the same way, he condemns a person who has said to his brother, 'You idiot'; he has in mind the person who has done so by way of insult in the usual way. In any case, we[870] read that Christ himself was moved by anger, and elsewhere he calls his disciples

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and 'dot'). One should note Erasmus' characterization of his annotations as an *explanatio* 'clarification' of the New Testament; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 49–50 and similarly 'The *Paraphrases*' 88.

862 'Forced to the quick': *ad vivendum exigenda*, ie forced into a strictly literal interpretation. Cf *Adagia* II iv 13, where it is said that the expression is used 'of the analysis of something with needless precision and pedantry.'

863 Cf Matt 5:34. Cf the annotation on Matt 5:37 (*his abundantius est*): 'The difficulty in many problematic passages can be resolved if we understand that Christ has not absolutely forbidden these things, but forbidden that we do them in the way ordinary people do them' ASD VI-5 144:822–4.

864 Cf Matt 6:34.

865 Cf Matt 5:39.

866 Cf Matt 23:8.

867 Cf Matt 6:7.

868 Cf Luke 6:12.

869 Cf Matt 5:22.

870 we ... elsewhere he] First in *1520*; in*1519*, simply 'Christ himself'

fools, and Paul calls the Galatians 'fools' – but to reprove, not to assail.[871] Godliness,[872] too, has its own anger; love also has its own reproof.

The following are almost of the same sort. When in Matthew Christ says, 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice' [9:13, 12:7], he certainly wanted sacrifice, which he himself had appointed, but showing mercy comes before offering sacrifice. Again, when he says, 'My teaching is not mine' [John 7:16], he says that the teaching is not his, which as a man he attributed to the Father. Again, when he says that the Spirit was not yet because Jesus had not yet been glorified, he does not mean quite simply that the Spirit was not, but that that evangelical Spirit had not yet made its appearance among the apostles.[873]

Indeed, Latin speech itself also has certain idioms of its own, which sometimes deceive those who are little attentive or less learned. An example of this type is in Mark, the fifth chapter, when those who came to Christ from the house of the ruler of the synagogue are said to come from the ruler of the synagogue. We have this passage now long ago corrupted by those who did not recognize the special idiom of Latin whereby we Latin speakers say, 'We shall go "to me"' for 'to my house.'[874]

But you might perhaps be inclined to doubt whether one is permitted to find irony in the literature of the apostles and of the Gospels – though

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871 Cf Mark 3:5 (Christ moved by anger); Luke 24:25, Gal 3:1, 3 (disciples and Galatians called fools). 'Fools': *stulti* here, as also in ER and VG Luke 24:25 and Gal 3:3 (VG 3:1 *insensati*). In the paraphrases on the Lukan and Galatian passages Erasmus interprets the Greek *ἀνόητοι* as guileless, simple-minded, gullible; in his annotation on Gal 3:1 (*insensati*), as unformed, not very sagacious; cf CWE 48 233 and CWE 42 107–8.

872 Godliness ... reproof.] Added in *1520*

873 Cf John 7:39; for 'appearance among the apostles' see John 20:20–3; Acts 2:1–4. The allusion to John 7:39 reflects Erasmus' controversial reading of the verse from *1516* to *1535*: 'The Holy Spirit was not yet' in place of the Vulgate's 'The Spirit was not yet given.' Edward Lee attacked the reading, which Erasmus defended with a response reflecting his comment here; cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* (Note 91) CWE 72 200–1.

874 Cf Mark 5:35. The Vulgate printed with Erasmus' *1527* New Testament read '*to* the ruler of the synagogue,' a reading not cited, however, by Weber 1582. It was this reading Erasmus marked as corrupt in his annotation on the verse (*ad archisynagogum*), where he noted (from *1516*) that the corruption arose because the idiom – 'come from the ruler,' meaning 'come from the ruler's house' – was not recognized, and so the text was changed to 'come *to* the ruler,' since the ruler was clearly with Jesus. In a *1535* addition Erasmus acknowledged a figure of speech in the original Greek. Cf the annotation on Rom 16:10 ('of Aristobulus'

there can be no doubt that it is found in the Old Testament. Certainly in the eighteenth chapter of the third book of Kings Elijah, mocking the prophets of Baal, says: 'Cry out with a louder voice, for he is a god, and perhaps he is talking, or he is at an inn, or is on a journey, or surely he is asleep, and must be awakened' [1 Kings 18:27].[875] In the opinion of Theophylact, the Bulgarian bishop, irony can be perceived in these words of Christ, 'Sleep now and take your rest' [Matthew 26:45; Mark 14:41].[876] Again, in Paul, the sixth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, 'Those who are the more despised, set them to judge' [6:4] – this can be seen to have been said with irony, especially since there follows, 'I speak to your shame' [6:5].[877] Perhaps also those words of Christ are not very far from irony, 'It is not good to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs' [Matthew 15:26]; nor these, 'I came not to call the righteous but sinners' [Matthew 9:13]; for he did not truly believe

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house'), where in *1535* he added the same examples as he added (also in *1535*) to the annotation on Mark 5:35 to illustrate the idiom: 'We came to Vesta's' (ie we came to the temple of Vesta), 'in Hades' (ie in Hades' place).

875 The Vulgate, following the Septuagint, named the books of Samuel the first two books of Kings (see Jerome's *Prologus* to the book of Kings, Weber 364–5). Hence 3 and 4 Kings in the Vulgate are equivalent to 1 and 2 Kings in most modern Bibles.

876 The Vulgate reads these words as a command (DV, AV), not as a question (NEB, RSV); cf Erasmus' annotation on Matt 26:45 (*dormite iam et requiescite*), where he defends the reading of the text as a command, notes the irony of the saying, and in a *1519* addition expresses his pleasure in discovering that 'Theophylact had stressed the same point in his commentary on Mark.' When Erasmus composed the *Ratio* in late 1518, he had only recently identified Theophylact accurately. He had cited him earlier as 'Vulgarius,' and in the early summer of 1518 had been able to prove that the commentaries on Scripture translated into Latin and circulating under the name of Athanasius were in fact the commentaries of Theophylact. For the details of the discovery see further CWE 56 15 n25, Ep 1790:10–32, and 'New Testament Scholarship' 80 with n320 and 132 with n554. For Theophylact's comments see PG 123 449D–452A.

877 Cf the annotation on 1 Cor 6:4 (*illos constituite ad iudicandum*). Erasmus recognized that the Greek could be read as either imperative or indicative, but he preferred the imperative (and so translated), explaining that when Paul enjoins the Corinthians to appoint as judges the most despised among them, he does not intend to be taken literally; he has merely used a manner of speaking to emphasize the outrageous incongruity of an appeal by a Christian to a pagan judge. Modern translations prefer to take the verb as indicative in a question: 'Do you appoint as judges outsiders?' So in RSV, NRSV, NEB; but AV adopted Erasmus' interpretation.

that they were righteous, but he reproaches them because they thought they were righteous.

There are many other figures of speech and figures of thought that contribute either the weight or the pleasure of discourse to the artistic arrangement.[878] Although[879] the sense of mystic Scripture stands firm without them, through these figures the Scriptures steal into our minds more effectually and more pleasurably,[880] and are discussed and expounded more felicitously. St Augustine, in his work entitled *On Christian Doctrine*, was not reluctant to point out at great length these figures in the sacred books.[881] Donatus and Diomedes expounded all these figures with care, but Quintilian did so with even greater care in the ninth book of the *Rhetorical Institutes*.[882] But just so that no one disdains this part of literary study as philological and trivial, Augustine in his work *On Christian Doctrine* directs that it be carefully learned as being useful for understanding the canonical books.[883]

Now, ambiguity is indeed a fault in discourse, but one that often cannot be avoided, though Fabius advises that it must be avoided as much as possible.[884] Augustine wants ambiguity to be so entirely avoided that he considers that a manifest solecism should sooner be adopted than an ambiguous expression used, and he prefers that we say *ossum* [bone] rather than *os* [bone

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878 For the distinction between figures of speech and figures of thought see Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 9.1.10–18; and cf *Methodus* n42.

879 Although ... felicitously.] Added in *1520*

880 On 'force' and 'pleasure' as desirable qualities in the biblical narrative see Hoffmann *Rhetoric and Theology* 184–91; and Robert D. Sider 'Erasmus on the Epistle to the Romans: A Literary Reading' in *Acta conventus Neo-Latini Torontonensis* ed Alexander Dalzell and Charles Fantazzi, Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 86 (Binghampton 1991) 129–35.

881 Cf Augustine *De doctrina christiana*, especially 3.29.

882 For Aelius Donatus see *Ratio* 509 with n97. Diomedes (late fourth / early fifth century), like Donatus, wrote an *ars grammatica*. In *De ratione studii* Diomedes is listed among 'the best authors' as a Latin grammarian; and Donatus and Diomedes appear together as authors whose 'grammatical figures' should be 'learned off,' CWE 24 667, 670. Cf also *Contra morosos* paragraph 11 and Ep 843:99–104, where Erasmus defends himself against the charge that he subjects the words of Christ to the rules of Donatus. 'Rhetorical Institutes' ie *Institutio oratoria*.

883 Cf Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 3.29.40; and *Methodus* n46.

884 'Ambiguity': *amphibologia*; in some classical sources, *amphibolia*. For the figure exemplified see Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 2.9; as a vice, ibidem 8.2.16.

or mouth] if we refer to one of those[885] objects that are in the plural called *ossa*, not *ora*.[886] In this, indeed, I entirely disagree with him, except[887] when one speaks in the presence of the simple folk – which is how Augustine felt, in whose time ordinary people then used to understand and to speak whatever kind of Latin they could. In any case, when did Augustine in any of his books ever say *ossum* to avoid ambiguity? In[888] the same way, he never said *floriet* for *florebit* [will flourish]. For a long time this was permitted – among those who were allowed to pronounce *flos* [flower] and *ros* [dew] as neuter nouns, as we say *os.* But now such things would be said with no more excuse than if someone speaking among educated people were saying *tempo* for *tempus* [time].[889] But this difficulty [ambiguity] occurs more frequently in Greek than in Latin. Accordingly, I have in many places noted it, and where I could, I have eliminated it.[890] Generally, however, it is removed either, on the one hand, by the arrangement of words[891] (I mean a change in the order of words if the difficulty arises from word placement) or, on the other, by

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885 one of those] Added in *1520*

886 Cf Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 3.3.7. *Os*, nominative singular (genitive singular *ossis*, nominative plural *ossa*) is the standard Latin word for 'bone,' though *ossum*, a 'less correct' form for the nominative singular, was also used. *Os* (genitive singular *oris*, nominative plural *ora*) is the word for 'mouth.' Since one might understand *os* to mean either 'bone' or 'mouth,' Augustine preferred to keep the distinction between the two clear by using the 'less correct' form *ossum* for 'bone,' reserving *os* unambiguously for 'mouth.' This example appears repeatedly in Erasmus' work: cf *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae* ASD IX-2 76:308–14 with 311n, *Contra morosos* paragraph 9, and *Ecclesiastes* 3 CWE 68 977. On 'solecism' see *Contra morosos* paragraphs 6–20, 'Solecisms' in 'Errors in the Vulgate' 875–83; and for Titelmans' attempt to redefine 'solecism,' 'New Testament Scholarship' 333–4.

887 except ... avoid ambiguity?] Added in *1520*

888 In ... for *tempus*] Added in *1523*

889 *Floreo* is a second conjugation verb with its future properly *florebit*, not *floriet*, as though it were a fourth conjugation verb. Erasmus alludes to *De doctrina christiana* 2.13.20, where Augustine notes that congregations sing Ps 132:18 (VG 131:18) using *floriet*, not *florebit* (Holborn's text cites *floriebit* – perhaps a printer's error). *Flos* and *ros* (long 'o') are both masculine and are different in pronunciation from the neuter *os* (short 'o'). Erasmus regards *tempo* as a careless deviation from *tempus*, *temporis* (cf Italian *tempo*).

890 For examples see the General Index to CWE 56 SV 'Scripture: ambiguities in the Greek text of Romans.'

891 'Arrangement of words': *compositione*; cf Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 9.4.1–9.

clarifying the ambiguous expression through paraphrase. This is precisely the path Augustine pursues, offering some examples.[892]

Doubtless, the special use of a word sometimes makes the discourse ambiguous, but this is peculiar not so much to the language as to the writer, inasmuch as among authors each has language that is peculiar to himself. One who has read nothing but Cicero will frequently have difficulty in the language of Quintilian. So Paul at one time calls kindred or blood relationship 'flesh,' at another time he designates the whole person as flesh; sometimes the grosser part of a person or of another thing of any sort at all is said to be flesh; occasionally, he designates as flesh the affection of a person that entices one to the vices. Similarly, he often calls 'body' that which consists of limbs; sometimes 'body' has for him the same force as 'flesh.'[893] Somewhere they call that highest and heavenly one the Spirit; elsewhere they designate a mental impulse as 'spirit.' Again, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are said to be the gift of 'the Spirit'; sometimes the movement of this air around us is called wind [*spiritus*], as here: 'The wind [*spiritus*] blows where it will' [John 3:8 RSV]. Almost identical to this is Paul's statement: 'My spirit prays, but my understanding is without fruit' [1 Corinthians 14:14].[894]

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892 Augustine pursues the question of the ambiguity of Scripture in *De doctrina christiana* 3.2.2–5.19, illustrating with examples the sources of ambiguity and various ways to eliminate it.

893 For 'flesh' as 'kindred' and as 'the whole person' see respectively Rom 9:3, 11:14, and 3:20; and the paraphrases on these verses, CWE 42 53, 65, and 24. For 'flesh' as the baser part of a person see Rom 7:5, 18, 25, and 8:1; and the paraphrase on Rom 8:10–11, CWE 42 46. For the 'baser part of anything at all' see Rom 8:5: 'Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh' (RSV), while flesh and spirit sometimes signify in Erasmus' work contrasting parts of the Law (cf eg the paraphrase on Rom 8:5–11 CWE 42 46). For the various senses in which Erasmus understood 'flesh' as a Pauline theological term see eg the paraphrase on Rom 8:1–14 CWE 42 45–7, the annotations on Rom 8:3 ('in which it was weak' and 'after the likeness of the flesh of sin'), also *Enchiridion* CWE 66 46–54, 78–9, and 83; and for further references see CWE 50 95 n12. For 'flesh' as an 'affection' leading to sin see Rom 7:5; and ER: *cum essemus in carne, affectus peccatorum … vigebant in membris nostris.* For 'flesh' as a term 'peculiar to the language of St Paul' see the Argument to Romans, CWE 42 14. For 'body' as 'limbs' see 1 Cor 12:14. And for 'body' as equivalent to 'flesh' see Rom 7:17–25; and the paraphrases on these verses CWE 42 43–4.

894 In the biblical allusions here Erasmus illustrates the various senses in which the Latin *spiritus* is used in the New Testament: breath or wind, mind or spirit, and Holy Spirit. For the Spirit as the heavenly one see Acts 2:1–4; and the paraphrase on Acts 1:1–2:13 CWE 50 5–17, where the heavenly origin and character

Of the same kind are these expressions, too: when they say *fides* for *fiducia* [trust], since in Latin *fides* is used of the one who promises, as in the expression *dare fidem* [to give a pledge], or of one who does or does not fulfil a promise, as in the expression *solvere fidem* [to fulfil a promise]. *Praestare fidem* [to keep faith] does not designate the action of the one who trusts or believes, except when we say, 'I have confidence in you' [*habeo tibi fidem*], 'He deprives another of his credit' [*abrogate illi fidem*].[895] A further example: when in Paul one who helps is said to build, one who harms is said to destroy; again, when he calls a kindness voluntarily conferred a 'blessing.'[896] But I have said more about these at various points in the *Annotations* and have touched briefly on the subject in the Arguments I have written for the apostolic Epistles.[897]

The[898] special significance attached to words will also have to be noted.[899] For this, a knowledge of the different languages is especially useful. It is a case in point when Paul calls himself a slave of Jesus Christ rather than a worshipper, for a slave is entirely in the power of another, depends upon

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of the Spirit are emphasized. For gifts of the Holy Spirit as gifts of the Spirit see 1 Cor 12: 4, 7; for spirit as mind see the annotation on 2 Cor 2:13 (*non habeo requiem spiritui meo*), where 'spirit' is identified as 'mind' (*animus*). The citation from John, 'The wind blows where it will,' follows the Vulgate with its play on the words *spiritus* ... *spirat* 'the breath ... breathes' (ie the wind ... blows).

895 This brief discussion anticipates methodologically the lengthy annotation added in *1527* on Rom 1:17 ('from faith unto faith'); cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 301 with nn1267, 1268, where the apparent influence of Latomus, Lee, and López Zúñiga is noted. On the distinction between *fides* and *fiducia* see CWE 42 xxxvii. These words have been widely annotated in the CWE translations of the *Paraphrases*; cf the Index of Greek and Latin Words Cited in CWE 42–5, 47, 48, and 50. Translators have interpreted *fiducia* as 'trust,' 'confidence,' sometimes with the sense of 'boldness.'

896 For 'build-destroy' see Rom 14:19–20. In the Argument to Romans, CWE 42 14, Erasmus notes that 'to build' (*aedificare*) is an expression 'peculiar to the language of Paul'; cf eg 1 Cor 3:9–18; Eph 4:12–16. For 'blessing' see 2 Cor 9:5; and the annotation on the verse (*repromissam benedictionem*).

897 'Arguments' were composed for the epistles by Erasmus during an illness in 1518 and published with the *Ratio verae theologiae* in November 1518, though they were also bound and sold separately; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 112 with n482.

898 The ... receptivity of each.] This paragraph was added in *1522*, except for the final sentence, added in *1523*.

899 'Special significance': *emphasis*. Erasmus defines *emphasis* in the annotation on Rom 1:1 ('set apart for the gospel of God') CWE 56 7–8 with n3. Erasmus frequently points out the *emphasis* of words in his *Annotations*; cf the examples cited in the General Index to CWE 56 sv 'rhetoric: emphasis.'

the will of his master, and whatever he intends to do, it is for his lord, not for himself.[900] There is a similar case in the Epistle to the Corinthians, where he calls the apostles *ὑπηρέται*, that is, ministers of Christ, and *οἰκονόμοι*, that is, stewards of the mysteries of God.[901] A minister is an administrator and steward of someone else's property, not his own, and dispenses at his lord's will, not his own, what and how much each needs, according to circumstances. Thus bishops do not seek their own interests, they do not teach their own doctrines, but what belongs to Christ. They do not propound the same things to everyone, but attune their discourse to the receptivity of each. This[902] *emphasis* is most properly observed in the original language in which the author wrote – though St Hilary, often even in the Psalms, brings out the *emphasis* from the Greek translation.[903]

Sometimes there is also *emphasis* in the little word that seemed to have no importance in common speech. For example, we read in the twenty-sixth chapter of Leviticus, 'Keep my sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary' [26:2]: it is not without design that he has added the possessive ['my'], for this world, too, has its sabbaths; it has its sanctuary, too. A person who scrupulously abstains from manual work without, meanwhile, refraining from oaths, harlots, intoxication, keeps his own sabbath, not the sabbath of the Lord. The person who hears the divine liturgy every day, who is signed with the cross, sprinkled with water, still all this while he wishes his neighbour ill, all this while he cheats, plunders, practises usury – this person is reverencing not the sanctuary of the Lord but his own sanctuary.[904] For God speaks thus in Isaiah: 'Your new moons and your solemnities my soul hates' [1:14]. How is it that he speaks of 'their' new moons – the ones he himself had appointed? But it was they who had made these their own by keeping them improperly and not for the purpose for which he had appointed them. As when we fast either because of frugality or vainglory, or fast committing meanwhile quite serious sins through other more shocking vices, this is our fast, not God's.

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900 Cf Rom 1:1, 14:4–9; and *Ratio* 590 with n539, where Erasmus notes Paul's self-designation as a slave.

901 Cf 1 Cor 4:1; and *Ratio* 591 with n541.

902 This ... Greek translation.] Added in *1523*

903 On the 'Greek translation' cf *Ratio* 645 with n819. For Hilary's references to the Greek to elucidate the text see eg *Tractatus in psalmum 2* 35 (on Ps 2:9) and *Tractatus in psalmum* 51 12 (on 51:4).

904 With the sentiment expressed here compare Erasmus' comments to Prince Ferdinand in the dedicatory letter to the prince for the *Paraphrase on John*, Ep 1333:238–65.

Origen's observation is also relevant here: Jesus says to Peter, *ὕπαγε ὀπίσω μου* ['Get behind me'; Matthew 16:23], for Christ wants him to be an imitator of his death. To Satan he says only, *ὑπαγε ὀπίσω* ['Get behind'; Matthew 4:10], no doubt sending him away and not inviting to imitation one whose lamentable perversity he knew.[905] Since these instances occur everywhere, there is no reason to pursue them; it is enough to have pointed to them.

But to return to allegories.[906] Special care must be devoted to these, since almost all Divine Scripture, through which the eternal wisdom speaks with us in a stammering tongue, as it were, rests upon allegories. Unless these come to our attention, especially in the books of the Old Testament, the reader will lose a large part of the fruit. If[907] a passage were taken in a

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905 In *1516* in the annotations on both Matt 4:10 (*vade Satana*) and Matt 16:23 (*vade retro Satana*) Erasmus had said that Jesus gave the same command to both Satan and Peter. In *1519* in both annotations he added the allusion to Origen, noting now the significant difference in the words of the command: Satan is told to be gone, Peter is told to follow. Here in the *Ratio* Erasmus misquotes Matt 4:10, which in his text of the New Testament (and in the preferred reading) expresses Jesus' command with a single word *ὕπαγε* 'go.' By adding here the word *ὀπίσω* (*hypage opiso*) the two commands (Matt 4:10 and 16:23) become parallel except for the additional *μου* 'me' in 16:23, thus giving the word 'me' a special emphasis.

906 Erasmus has already touched briefly on allegory; cf *Ratio* 632 with n745. With the study of allegory that follows here, compare the extensive discussion in *Ecclesiastes* 3 CWE 68 930–72. By at least 1508, Erasmus was planning a work on 'scriptural and theological allegories'; cf Ep 211:24–50. He refers again in the *De copia* to a 'short work I have in hand on scriptural allegories,' CWE 24 635:12. Three editions of the *De copia* (1512, 1514, 1517) had preceded the *Ratio* of 1518/1519, and Erasmus may have regarded the discussion here as the completion of or an alternative to a preliminary sketch previously made for a study of biblical allegories; cf Betty Knott's suggestion in CWE 24 635:12n; also 'New Testament Scholarship' 21–2 with nn119 and 121.

907 If ... absurd.] Added in *1522*. Beginning with this addition a large part of this section on allegories (661–78) appeared first in additions made in *1522* and *1523*.The insertions in the passage here (extending from the beginning of this paragraph to n941) render the sequence somewhat difficult to follow, but note: a single sentence from *1519* (cf n932) appears in the midst of the additions of *1522* and *1523*; otherwise the text of *1519/1520* returns at n938. Thus in *1519/1520* this passage was brief, reading: 'But to return to allegories. Special care … rests upon allegories. Unless these come to our attention, especially in the books of the Old Testament, the reader will lose a large part of the fruit. Sometimes the sense of the words is destructive unless you apply the remedy of allegory, for example, "Blessed are those who have made themselves eunuchs

straightforward way, the sense of the words would sometimes be manifestly untrue, occasionally even ridiculous and absurd. And[908] by a salutary plan the divine wisdom has taken precaution lest, if no obstacle appeared in the historical text,[909] we should suppose there was not any more meaning there. Accordingly, the divine wisdom breaks up the course of the biblical reading with certain rough bogs, chasms, and similar obstacles, mixing in things either that cannot have happened or could not happen, or that, if they happened, they would be absurd. In this way, the mind, barred by such obstacles from understanding the passage in the ordinary manner, might wander through more hidden byways and at length arrive at the place where the riches of a more recondite understanding are spread out. This pattern occurs not only in narratives but also in prophecies and precepts.

And yet we must not remove all the historical sense in the divine books just because, for the reasons mentioned, certain passages are found through which the divine providence wished to compel, as it were, our mental powers to explore the spiritual meaning. Generally, both senses stand together. For I believe that God's precept, 'You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain' [Deuteronomy 25:4] had long ago been observed among the Hebrews also according to the historical sense. And yet Paul writes, 'Does God take care for oxen? Or does he not speak especially for our sake? For this was written for our sake, because one who ploughs should plough in hope, and one who threshes in the hope of receiving' [1 Corinthians 9:9–10].[910]

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for the kingdom of heaven," and this prescript of Paul ['Peter' in *Froben 1519* – by mistake], "For doing this you will heap coals of fire upon his head." It is Augustine's opinion … a little book.'

908 And ... single example] Added in *1523*; nn917 and 919 indicate the conclusion of this *1523* insertion.

909 'Historical text': *historico contextu*. The 'historical text' is a near equivalent to the 'literal text,' as 'historical sense' is to 'literal sense,' but carries a somewhat broader connotation, pointing more suggestively to the biblical text as a historical construction in a context of real historical events; cf *In psalmum 2* CWE 63 78–9, and the introduction to the volume, xxiii–xxx. In the *1523* insertions here Erasmus consistently speaks of the *sensus historicus* 'historical sense'; but cf *Ratio* n934.

910 Erasmus, citing perhaps from memory, quotes predominantly the Vulgate text, intermingled with his own translation. The Vulgate concluded the sentence with the expression 'of receiving fruit,' from which Erasmus here omits 'fruit,' an expression he regarded as unauthentic, 'added to clarify.' He himself translated, 'One who threshes in hope ought to partake of his hope'; cf the annotation on 1 Cor 9:10 (*et qui triturat*).

But if anyone should look for an example of an incongruous narrative, many are encountered straight off in Genesis itself. For how is it consistent that the first day of the created world, the second, and the third, for which both evening and morning are mentioned, were without sun, moon, stars – the first day, moreover, even without sky?[911] Next, how incongruous to understand according to the historical sense that God, like some farmer, planted trees in Paradise, in Eden towards the East,[912] and there he planted a certain tree of life, that is, a real tree that could be seen and touched; that this tree had such power that whoever had eaten of its fruit with his physical teeth would receive life, [and] that he planted also another tree from which, if anyone ate, such a person would understand the distinction between good and evil![913] The narratives that follow are almost as feeble: where it is said that God walks in Paradise in the cool afternoon air; that Adam hides under a tree; that Cain withdrew from the face of the Lord; finally, where it is written that God completed some portion of his work on each day and at last on the seventh day rested from his work, as though he was worn out.[914]

Inasmuch as the exterior form of this sort of story offends the reader at first blush, it advises him that under this covering there lies hidden some more recondite sense, so that he should ask what an allegorical day is, what is the division of days, what is the rest from work, what the planting, the tree of life, the tree giving knowledge of good and evil, what is the 'afternoon,' what is 'God walking in the cool air,' Adam lying hidden, what is the face of the Lord, what is 'departing from him'?[915] But whoever will examine the books of the Old Testament, which abounds in tropes of this kind, will find many examples like these.

The same thing is somewhat more rare in the New Testament, but, nevertheless, we may even here, perhaps, find narrative that is absurd according to the historical sense. For example, we read that the Lord was led away into

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911 Cf Gen 1:1–13.The allegorization that follows here has a close parallel in *Enchiridion* (1503) CWE 66 67–8.

912 'In Paradise, in Eden towards the East' seems to reflect the Septuagint of Gen 2:8 rather than the Vulgate's *paradisum voluptatis a principio*.

913 Cf Gen 2:8–9 and 15–17, 3:22–3.

914 Cf Gen 3:8 (God walks, Adam hides), Gen 4:16 (Cain), Gen 2:1–2 (seventh day). The language here partially reflects that of the Vulgate (see next note).

915 The reference is to Gen 4:16: 'Cain withdrew from the face of the Lord.' 'Cool afternoon air' seems to reflect the Vulgate of Gen 3:8, *ad auram post meridem*; the Septuagint reads '[walking] in the evening'; cf NRSV, 'They heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze.'

a high mountain, from where he looked upon all the kingdoms of the world and their glory.[916] How would anyone be able to show to corporeal eyes from a single mountain – no matter how high – the kingdom of the Persians, Scythians, Indians, Spaniards, Gauls, Britons, and to show in what ways each particular nation does homage to its king? But as I have quite frequently said, this also occurs in the prophets.[917] Here[918] is a case in point – for[919] I want to be satisfied with a single example: Isaiah in the seventh chapter writes about Christ: 'Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel' [7:14]. It is clear that the name given to Christ was not Emmanuel but Jesus. From this circumstance, indeed, certain Jews and heretics used to make their case that the Jesus whom we worship was not he whom God had promised through Isaiah.[920] In fact, the prophet had in mind not simply the appellation given but its meaning, for God began truly to be with us when Jesus was born, restoring the world through his Son. But what follows is even more absurd: 'For before he knows how to say father and mother, he will take the forces of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria' [Isaiah 8:4] – so reads Tertullian; certainly Jerome, too, applies the passage to Christ.[921] How is it appropriate for a child to be called a warrior? Will a child with his squalling summon to arms an army and give the signal for war not with a trumpet but with his rattle? Will he attack the enemy not from a horse and chariot but from the neck of his nurse or nanny, and press down on Damascus and Samaria instead of the breasts?[922] As a result of this incongruity of expres-

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916 Cf Matt 4:8.

917 Cf eg *Ratio* 632–3 and *Enchiridion* CWE 66 34, 68.

918 Here ... evangelical word.] This remaining portion of the paragraph was added in *1522* except for the short insertion in the first sentence; cf next note.

919 for ... single example] Added in *1523*; cf previous note.

920 Erasmus might have gathered the information from the writings of Tertullian (*editio princeps* 1521), to whom he presently refers. Tertullian indicates that to support their case Jews and Marcionites argued from the discrepancy in name; cf *Adversus Iudaeos* 9.1–2 and *Adversus Marcionem* 3.12.1–2.

921 Cf Tertullian *Adversus Marcionem* 3.13.1; Jerome *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* 3 (on 8:1–4). Erasmus adopts Tertullian's text, in which the historical improbability (the infant will capture Damascus) is patent. The Vulgate text approximates the text in modern translations (Damascus will be captured), where the scenario portrayed is historically quite possible. Tertullian's text appears to be based on a reading of the Septuagint. For Tertullian cf *Ratio* 516 with n121 and 695 with n1077.

922 Erasmus has adopted this and the previous sentence from Tertullian with very little change; cf *Adversus Marcionem* 3.13.2.

sion heretics denied that this prophecy belonged to Christ. But if you apply allegory, it will fit nicely the Gospel story, which relates that the three Magi had come of their own accord to Bethlehem to acknowledge the new king by offering gifts. This was a king who was bringing the whole universe under his control, not by troops or arms but by celestial power and the sword of the evangelical word.[923]

Now[924] in the case of the commandments in both Testaments we must not, it is true, doubt that certain ones must be observed according to the historical sense, for example: honour your father and your mother, worship one God, do not steal, do not swear falsely, do not kill.[925] It is just as true that certain commandments seem incongruous if you look for nothing beyond the outer shell of the words. The Law prescribes that a boy be circumcised on the eighth day, and it was right that parents be punished who did not take care to have their little infants circumcised. But then Scripture says that a boy not circumcised is to be utterly cut off from his people.[926] But of what was the boy himself guilty if he had not been circumcised? It is even more incongruous that although the Law enjoins observance of the sabbath on pain of death, it nevertheless uses these words: 'But each of you will be in your houses; no one will be moved from his own place on the day of the sabbath' [Exodus 16:29].[927] For how is it possible for one to sit at home all day and not move from his seat? Not unlike these is the prohibition against bearing any burden on the sabbath. This kind of absurdity forced even the Jews themselves to look for some trope in these words, for they had no scruple about pulling an ox or an ass out of a pit into which it had fallen.[928]

One may find some prescripts of this kind in the literature of the Gospels, too. Here is an example: 'Do not greet anyone on the way' [Luke 10:4]. Are the apostles forbidden to offer a salutation to a person who meets

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923 'Sword of the evangelical word,' an expression adapted from Eph 6:17. Cf the annotation on Luke 22:36 (*sed nunc qui habet sacculum*), which Erasmus concludes (all editions) by noting that the 'sword' of Luke 22:36 must be allegorized as the 'divine word,' recalling Heb 4:12, a passage he associates with the sword of Eph 6:17 in his paraphrase on that verse; cf CWE 43 355.

924 Now ... night.] This and the following paragraph, apart from the final sentence, were added in *1523*.

925 Cf Exod 20:12, 3, 15, 16, 13.

926 Cf Gen 17:12–14.

927 The Vulgate reads, 'Let no one go out of [*egrediatur*] his own place'; similarly the Septuagint. On the sanction of death for breaking the sabbath see Exod 31:14.

928 Cf Jer 17:21–2 (the prohibition); Luke 14:5 (the permitting scruple).

them on their journey? Likewise, the prohibition against having two tunics each or shoes on the feet:[929] how can this precept be kept, especially in regions frozen stiff with cold and frost? Again, the prescript that one who has been struck on the right cheek offer the striker the left also – especially when it is common practice for one who strikes with the right hand to strike the left cheek?[930] These, too, I think, belong to the same genre: 'Let your loins be girded and your lamps be burning in your hands' [Luke 12:35],[931] and, 'Give to everyone who asks of you' [Luke 6:30], for if you insist on a literal interpretation, it will not be right to deny a girl a night. In[932] some instances, the sense of the words is even destructive unless you apply the remedy of allegory, for example, 'Blessed are those who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of God' [Matthew 19:12].[933]

Similar[934] to this are the precepts about cutting out the right eye, about cutting off the right hand or foot, about praying always – which in trying to observe according to the literal meaning of the words, certain people have won for themselves a place among the heretics.[935] And yet the precept put forth by Christ in Luke is repeated by Paul.[936] For in the apostolic Epistles,

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929 Cf Matt 10:10; compare the interpretation Erasmus gives these precepts considered as tropes, *Ratio* 650 with n842.

930 Cf Matt 5:39.

931 Erasmus cites the Vulgate as represented in the *1527* and the Clementine texts, where 'in your hands' is added as here; cf Weber 1633 with 35n. It is omitted from Erasmus' New Testament text, both Greek and Latin, but is included in his paraphrase on the verse.

932 In some instances, even] The reading of *1522* and *1523*; in *1519* and *1520*, 'sometimes'; cf *Ratio* n907.

933 The beatitude expressed here ('blessed') is without explicit warrant from the New Testament text of either Erasmus or the Vulgate, but Erasmus elsewhere also associates the text with beatitude; cf the paraphrase on Matt 19:12, '… the gospel has its eunuchs too, clearly blessed …' CWE 45 273; and the paraphrase on 1 Cor 7:7: '[Christ] declares blessed those who had castrated themselves for the kingdom of God' CWE 43 90. Cf *Ratio* 594 n155.

934 Similar ... literal sense] Added in *1523*. In this paragraph 'literal meaning' renders *sensum verborum* and 'literal sense' translates *grammaticum sensum*; cf *Ratio* n909.

935 Cf Matt 5:29–30 (eye, hand); Luke 18:1 (praying always). Erasmus may be referring to the Euchites, known as the Messalians, who taught that concentrated and ceaseless prayer was essential for delivery from the demon that dwelt within each person as a result of Adam's sin; cf ODCC 574 'Euchites' and 1081 'Messalians.'

936 Cf Rom 12:12; 1 Thess 5:17.

too, certain things are found that bar us from the ordinary sense and compel us to turn up, with the help of tropology, a sense worthy of the Holy Spirit. What pertinence has Paul's precept that if anyone is called when circumcised, he should not put on a foreskin?[937] What harm would there be if a circumcised Jew, to avoid an indecent appearance, should put on a foreskin, provided this could be suitably done. It would even be impious to want to keep, according to the literal sense, this prescript of Paul,[938] 'For doing this, you will heap coals of fire upon his head' [Romans 12:20]. It is Augustine's opinion that this text, too, is of the same kind: 'Unless anyone has eaten my flesh or drunk my blood etc.'[939] Here, therefore, as I have said, a knowledge of material things is useful, [and] also to have had practice beforehand during youth in poetical allegories, or even in drawing comparisons from any kind of thing, and discussing them.[940] About comparisons I have long ago published a little book.[941]

There are those who turn the story of the New Testament also to allegory. I very strongly approve, since it is sometimes necessary, and very often pleasant and neat, provided one treats the matter skilfully. It seems to me that Ambrose is, in this respect, sometimes extravagant, if I may say so without offence to him; for example, when he says that Peter warming himself at the fire did not feel cold in body, since the season then could not be cold, but the coldness was that of the mind. Ambrose neatly turns this into allegory when he says the following: 'But it was winter when Jesus was not acknowledged, when there was no one who saw the light, when the consuming fire was denied' – and the rest along the same line. But nothing prevents the facts

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937 Cf 1 Cor 7:18. 'Put on a foreskin': *adducere praeputium*, as in the Vulgate. Erasmus preferred the 'more modest' phrase *accersere praeputium*, as in his translation from *1516*; cf his annotation on the verse (*non adducat praeputium*). Challenged by López Zúñiga, Erasmus said that he found the medical procedure perplexing and concluded that the expression was probably a trope pointing to an attitude of mind rather than a prescript for the body; cf *Apologia ad annotationes ad Stunicae* ASD IX-2 184:375–82; also the paraphrase on the verse, CWE 43 98–9 with n41.

938 this prescript of Paul] First in *1523*; previously, 'and this precept of Paul ['Peter' *Froben 1519*]' (cf n907). Cf Augustine *De doctrina chistiana* 3.16.24.

939 Cf John 6:53–4; and Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 3.16.24.

940 Cf *Ratio* 501–7.

941 An allusion to the *Parabolae sive similia*, published first in 1514. For this as a work of comparisons see the dedicatory letter, Ep 312:28–9 (cf *Ratio* n965). The work had already been revised and reprinted several times before the first edition of the *Ratio* appeared in November 1518; cf *Parabolae* CWE 23 124–6.

of the narrative also from being trustworthy. Moreover, Ambrose adds: 'If we consider the time, it could not have been winter,' and a little later, 'The cold was, therefore, of the mind, not of the body.' Indeed, we may grant that during those months the daytime temperature in this region is warm enough; yet even in places that grow very hot the night can be cold.[942]

Very much like this are the comments that Ambrose adds concerning Peter's denial. They reflect subtle wit more than they provide a true defence of Peter, for Christ had permitted Peter to fall so that, by returning to his senses and repenting through the compassion of Christ, he might strengthen his brothers.[943] And yet, that Peter could have sinned – Ambrose wants this to seem so strange that not even the Gospel writers could understand his sin, as though it was a sufficient proof that they did not understand a story about which their narratives varied, although this occurs in several places. Then Ambrose twists the words in Matthew and Mark when Peter replies to the girl who was betraying him, 'I do not know what you mean' [Matthew 26:70; Mark 14:68] to give the sense that Peter had not denied the Lord but had put himself at a distance from the woman's betrayal. But even if anyone should press the point that Peter had indeed denied that he belonged to those who had been with Jesus the Galilean (or the Nazarene, as it is written in Mark), still Ambrose bends the words to the interpretation that Peter denied he had known as a Galilean or Nazarene one whom he knew as the Son of God.[944] Again, Ambrose twists in the same direction the statement in Matthew, 'I do not know the man' [26:72], as if he who wished to be regarded as a disciple of God was not a disciple of the man. To confirm his interpretation, he cites

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942 Cf Ambrose *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam* 10.76 (on Luke 22:54–62). The story is told also in Matt 26:69–75, Mark 14:54, 66–72, John 18:25–7; of the images of light and fire both are in Luke, Matthew has neither, Mark notes only the light. For the expression 'consuming fire' see Heb 12:29. Erasmus himself, in his paraphrase on Luke 22:61–2, interprets tropologically the night, the cold, and the fire, acknowledging at the same time the historical sense; cf CWE 48 204.

943 Cf Luke 22:32 (strengthening the brothers), 22:61–2 (the compassionate glance of Christ and Peter's repentance); and cf the paraphrase on these verses: Peter, 'touched by his Lord's gaze … struck with intense grief … wept bitterly' CWE 48 204.

944 Cf Ambrose *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam* 10.78–81; Matt 26:71–2; Mark 14:70–1. Peter is said to have been with 'Jesus the Galilean' in Matt 26:69, with 'Jesus the Nazarene' in Mark 14:67. That Ambrose saw in narrative variation the proof of the evangelists' incomprehension is evidently an inference of Erasmus. Ambrose's exposition of the Gospel story is set out in detail in *Ecclesiastes* 3 CWE 68 943–7.

from Paul: 'Paul, an apostle not from man nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father' [Galatians 1:1]. I am aware that some explain this otherwise, but it seems to me that Paul did not refer to Christ's human nature (which he did not take away from Christ), but by the word 'man' he wanted something quite weak and lowly to be understood, as when he says, 'Do I speak this after the manner of men?' [1 Corinthians 9:8].[945]

Jerome[946] seems to criticize the comment in the short notes he wrote on Matthew: 'I know,' he says, 'that certain persons with pious feelings towards the apostle Peter have interpreted this passage to say that Peter did not deny God, but man, and the sense, is, "I do not know the man, since I know him as God." The prudent reader perceives how frivolous this is. They defend the apostle in such a way that they make God guilty of a lie. For if Peter did not deny, then the Lord lied, who had said, "Truly, I say to you that on this night, before the cock crows, you will deny me thrice" [Matthew 26:34]. See what he says: you will deny me, not the man.'[947] So far Jerome.

It may well be that such things would be said cleverly and with applause in a school of declamatory rhetoric,[948] but in sacred things one must not trifle;[949] nor is it becoming to be clever, nor does it help to twist anything, lest we deprive of credit what is true while defending the false. The language

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945 For Ambrose's interpretation of Matt 26:72 (cf John 18:17 'Are you not a disciple of this man?'), and for his explanation of Gal 1:1, see *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam* 10.82–4. In 1517 Erasmus had discussed the Ambrosian interpretation of Peter's denial in his *Apologia ad Fabrum* CWE 83 44 and 92, in the latter passage very much as here showing that Ambrose's interpretation in effect denied the 'manhood' of Christ: what statement, he asks, could be more 'heretical?'

946 Jerome ... So far Jerome.] Added in *1522*

947 Cf Jerome *Commentarius in evangelium Matthaei* 4 (on 26:72). 'Short notes': *commentariolis*; in the prologue to the commentary Jerome describes his work as a 'brief exposition'; cf PL 26 20A–B.

948 'School of declamatory rhetoric': *schola declamatoria*. In Roman schools boys were often applauded for the extravagant treatment of declamatory themes; cf Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 2.2.9–12. But there may also be an allusion to Christian homiletic training with an explicit critique of 'display' oratory in preaching; cf John W. O'Malley SJ 'Erasmus and the History of Sacred Rhetoric: The *Ecclesiastes* of 1535' ERSY 5 (1985) 5–13.

949 'Must not trifle': *neque ludendum est*. Erasmus often uses the word *ludere* in speaking of Scripture. Titelmans deplored Erasmus' observation that in his translation of Scripture the Translator 'sports with,' 'trifles with,' 'indulges in' excessive variety (*ludere copia*). In response to Titelmans' complaint, Erasmus defined the word: 'Anything done for the sake of spiritual enhancement beyond necessity is, we say, *ludere* "to sport"; we should not suppose that *ludus*

of truth is simple according to the aphorism of the tragedian,[950] but nothing is either simpler or truer than Christ. Perhaps we have the same thing when Augustine, in a certain homily about the woman caught in adultery, adapts to allegory the five husbands and the sixth man not her husband – rather forced, in my view.[951] Now people philosophize everywhere over numbers – the numbers thirty, sixty, one hundred – adapting Hebrew matter to Greek and Latin numbers. Likewise, about the five thousand men who ate until full, the loaves, [952] the two fishes, the talents (ten, five, and one), the three measures of flour, the[953] two sparrows, which they interpret as body and soul.[954] Not that I would say that a mystery does not somewhere lie hidden in

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is only a game of dice' *Responsio ad Collationes* CWE 73 153–4 (cf LB IX 971B). Translated here 'trifle' and just below 'indulge in,' it carries something of the connotation of 'playing games.'

950 Cf Euripides *Phoenician Women* 469.

951 Cf Augustine *Tractates on John* 15.21 (on John 4:16–20). Augustine proposes that the five husbands are the five senses and the sixth man is 'understanding.' Although Augustine calls the woman an adulterer, the expression 'woman caught in adultery' is taken from John 8:3.

952 loaves] First in *1522*; previously, 'five loaves'

953 The ... soul.] Added in *1523*

954 Cf Matt 13:3–23, Mark 4:3–20 (sower); Matt 14:15–21, Mark 6:34–44, Luke 9:12–17, John 6:4–13 (the five thousand, the loaves and fishes); Matt 25:14–30, Luke 19:12–27 (talents); Matt 13:33, Luke 13:20–1 (flour); Matt 10:29 (sparrows). For the numbers of the talents Erasmus conflates the Matthean version (talents five, two, and one returning five, two, and one) with the Lukan version (*minae* ten, one to each, returning ten, five, and one). In additions made in *1519* to the *Annotations* Erasmus describes the allegorical significance given to numbers in two of the passages to which he refers here. In the annotation on Matt 13:8 (*aliud centesimum, aliud sexagesimum*) he criticizes the view of those who interpret the numbers as an order of priority in states of life, eg virginity, celibacy, marriage, and he refers to Jerome, Augustine, and Theophylact. In the annotation on Matt 13:33 (*in farina satis tribus*) he notes that Jerome, 'happy to philosophize about the numbers, refers [the three measures of meal] to the mystery of the Trinity.' In the annotation on John 2:20 (*quadraginta sex annis*), also added in *1519*, Erasmus notes that Augustine tried to 'adapt the Hebrew name Adam to Greek numbers,' but Jerome laughed at interpretations of this sort. Years later in 1531, Erasmus felt obliged to defend his annotation on John in his epistolary exchange with Agostino Steuco; cf Ep 2465:133–47; and for the controversy with Steuco see 'New Testament Scholarship' 344 with n1481. For the interpretation of the two sparrows as body and soul see Jerome *Commentarius in evangelium Matthaei* 2 (on 10:29). On 'philosophizing' said here in a somewhat critical tone see *Ratio* 555 with n336.

numbers, but that in certain cases alien and distorted interpretations seem to be proposed more[955] to display intellectual ability than to produce godliness, for with these they obscure the sacred teaching, just as Plato obscured philosophy with his numbers.[956] And[957] yet now and then we want these petty comments to serve as the base on which we build a structure of serious dogmas.[958] It is simplest and also, I think, closest to the truth to take the ten, the five, and the one to mean the very much, the moderate, and the very little.[959]

Moreover,[960] I must in general advise the reader that in this matter Origen frequently errs, as do Ambrose, Hilary, and any others who gladly imitate Origen. For in their zeal to impose allegory upon the text, they banish the grammatical sense, quite unnecessarily. Therefore, whoever wishes to treat sacred literature seriously will observe moderation in interpretation of this sort. Moreover, it would be safest in tracing out allegories to follow the sources many of which the Lord himself opened up for us; Paul also some.[961] But if anyone permits himself sometimes to indulge in allegories, he will be

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955 more ... his numbers.] Added in *1523*

956 In his allusion to Platonic numbers Erasmus may have in mind passages found in the *Timaeus* (cf especially the account of the creation of the soul 35A–36D). Those who 'obscure sacred teaching' may include the Christian Cabbalists, of whom Johann Reuchlin (d 1522) was one, and to whom Erasmus gave the full status of hero in the colloquy (1522) 'The Apotheosis of Johann Reuchlin' CWE 39 244–52. But Erasmus had no sympathy with the Cabbalists, as a *1527* addition to his annotation on 1 Tim 1:6 (*in vaniloquium*) shows, where he compares the Cabbalists to those who reduce all philosophy to numbers, ASD VI-10 30:222–4. Cf also *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* (1529) CWE 84 82–3 with n409 and the Translator's Note to *Paraclesis* 398–9 with nn17 and 18.

957 And ... dogmas.] Added in *1520*

958 Cf the satirical portrait in *Moria* CWE 27 132–4 of preachers who establish Trinitarian and Christological doctrine on the basis of clever but manifestly erroneous interpretations of biblical details.

959 In his annotations on the parable of the talents Erasmus does not comment on the significance of the numbers; but cf the annotation on Matt 13:8 (*aliud centesimum, aliud sexagesimum*): 'I think it is simpler to take the "hundredfold" for the most, "thirtyfold" for the least, and "sixtyfold" for the moderate, as in [the parable of] the ten talents, the five and the one.'

960 Moreover ... salutary.] This paragraph was added in *1523*. In his much later *Ecclesisastes* Erasmus will claim that Origen 'departs too freely from the letter,' while Ambrose and Hilary 'come close to Origen's example' CWE 68 917.

961 By 'sources' (*fontes*) Erasmus appears here to refer to the parables of Jesus, especially 'allegorizing' parables such as 'the wicked tenants' (Matt 21:33–46; Mark 12:1–12; Luke 20:9–19) and 'the sheep and the goats' (Matt 25:31–46). The Pauline Epistles provide examples of allegorization, eg the stories of Hagar and

granted more forbearance when he does so in exhortation, in consolation, in rebuke than in asserting the truth. Ambrose seems sometimes to have attributed this to the joy of the Lord's day, for he writes thus: 'And since we have turned from typology to the moral interpretation, it is a delight on the Lord's day among so many pleasures of the believers to relax the mind, to add some clever pleasantries: Zacchaeus in the sycamore tree – doubtless the new fruit of the new time, so that in him this passage also was fulfilled, "The fig tree has put forth its green figs"' [Song of Solomon 2:13].[962] He admits that other things he has discussed in the same vein are somewhat forced, but they were given to delight the ears of believers, for it is better to relax the mind with pleasantries of this sort. Even though they do some violence to the Scriptures, still they put one in mind of something salutary.

There are times when it is sufficient to have touched upon the chief point of the parable, even in those parables where allegory cannot be avoided. An example is the householder who remains on the watch for the thief in the night, which suggests nothing other than the sudden and unexpected coming of that day.[963] For[964] the sudden coming of Christ is not in every way like the thief who steals in unexpectedly. And if the householder had known the hour, he would have stayed awake. In our case, we must always remain on the watch, for the very reason that we do not know that time. Likewise, in the parable of the administrator who, in cheating his master, alleviated his debtors: the analogy[965] does not in every respect correspond – as though we also ought to attend to our own interests by fraud; rather, what in the parable is fraud against the master is in an allegorical sense faithfulness. That steward is said to be unjust because through falsified codicils he harmed the master and helped the debtors, and yet one who generously dispenses God's substance is said to be faithful.[966] Now the steward was prudent: soon

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Sarah and their sons (Gal 4:21–31) and of the Israelites in the wilderness (1 Cor 10:1–6); cf also the image of the potter and the clay (Rom 9:20–4), an allegorized metaphor.

962 Cf Ambrose *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam* 8.90 (on Luke 19:4).

963 Cf Matt 24:43; 1 Thess 5:2.

964 For ... comments.] The remainder of the paragraph was added in *1523*.

965 Cf Luke 16:1–13. 'Analogy': *collatio*; cf Ep 312:28–9: 'For the Greek *parabolê*, which Cicero Latinizes as *collatio*, a sort of comparison, is nothing more than a metaphor writ large.'

966 In this *1523* addition Erasmus adopts an interpretation identical with that in his paraphrase on the passage: we must take decisive action to secure our future welfare, ie to give generously of the resources God had given us for the service of others – this is to be a faithful steward of what has been entrusted to us; cf CWE 48 88–94.

to be removed from his office, he took thought quickly and made friends for himself; by their kindness in turn he himself would be helped in the future. If such prudence is praised, how much more will God approve a similar prudence in us, should we, because we know that life is very short, hasten to bestow a kindness upon a neighbour from the gifts God has given us – especially since he whose gifts we dispense cannot be defrauded. Again, in the parable of the widow who shamelessly importunes the judge, the character of God does not correspond to the character of the ungodly judge, who neither feared God nor had regard for human beings.[967] Again, in the parable of the nocturnal solicitor, the character of the man who lends bread to his friend is not consistent with God, for the man gave not because the solicitor was his friend, but because the solicitor had worn him out with his tireless importunity; otherwise he would have refused.[968] Accordingly, those who are eager to accommodate scrupulously all the parts of a parable to allegory frequently end up with more or less flat and trivial comments.

There are those who disdain all allegories as arbitrary and dreamlike.[969] I strongly disagree with such people, since I see that, apart from allegory, many interpretations are either absurd or pernicious or futile, frivolous and flat, and since it is clear that Christ used allegory and Paul interpreted some passages of the Old Testament allegorically.[970] But just as I disagree with those, so I am not able to approve the inept allegorization by certain people who themselves[971] invent the story they explain by allegory: a weary traveller sat upon the back of a huge dragon, having thought it was a tree trunk. Aroused, the dragon devoured the wretched fellow. The traveller is man, the

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967 Cf Luke 18:1–8.

968 Cf Luke 11:5–8. With the observation in this paragraph that the details of a parable may function simply to sustain the narrative, compare Erasmus' comment on the Psalms: 'In a narrative there are many details which owe their existence to the historical context and which have no allegorical significance' *In psalmum 33* CWE 64 301. For a general descriptive study of Erasmus' understanding of allegory see Hoffmann *Rhetoric and Theology* 95–133.

969 Cf *Enchiridion* CWE 66 34–5, where Erasmus contrasts the 'modern theologians' who 'stick to the letter' with the exegetes of antiquity: 'I have heard tell of some individuals who were so pleased with these petty human commentaries that they despised the interpretations of the ancient Fathers as if they were dreams ...'

970 Cf n961 above. The Spanish monks criticized this passage, in response to which Erasmus offered a precise definition of allegory: 'Whenever the grammatical sense, or the common and simple sense, is abandoned, this I call allegory' *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1077E.

971 themselves] Added in *1522*

dragon is the world, which destroys those who rest upon it! And[972] others, sillier than these, have been published in regular books by certain people and are read by some with astonishing avidity. It is enough to accommodate to allegory the narratives found in sacred literature, should the subject so demand, provided we ourselves invent nothing in addition. I have heard a certain theologian of Paris who drew out the parable of the prodigal son to forty days, so that[973] it equaled the forty days of Lent, inventing details of the son's journey both as he went away and as he returned: now he was in an inn eating meat pies prepared from tongues, now he was passing by a watermill, now[974] he was playing with dice, now he was lounging in some low tavern, now he was doing this, now that – and the theologian would twist the words of the prophets and evangelists to accommodate the trifles of this sort that he had composed.[975] And meanwhile, he seemed to be a god to the unskilled multitude and to the rather thickheaded men of importance.

The[976] zeal of such interpreters brings scarcely more profit than the zeal of those who, with plenty of leisure on their hands, have attempted to make theological matter fit figures and various outlines of letters (among whom, it seems, was Rabanus), or of those who attempt the same thing through fabricated pictures quite a bit more insipid than is the portrait of Cebes.[977] This

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972 And ... avidity.] The sentence was added in *1522*. Erasmus apparently has in mind such books as the *Gesta Romanorum*, a widely circulating book of entertaining stories whose details were allegorized to provide a moral application (*editio princeps* 1473); cf the *Moria*, where Erasmus cites the *Gesta*, which, he says, some 'proceed to interpret,' adding in *1522*, 'allegorically, tropologically and anagogically'; cf CWE 27 134 with nn465, 466.

973 so that ... Lent] Added in *1520*. This story and the allegory of the weary traveller both reappear together in *Ecclesiastes* 3 CWE 68 951.

974 now ... tavern] Added in *1520*

975 The theologian remains unidentified.

976 The ... commonly called.] Added in *1523*

977 Rabanus Maurus (c 780–856) was active as a teacher and abbot of the monastery at Fulda (818–42) and, later, archbishop of Mainz (847–56); cf *Apologia* n45. His biblical scholarship was voluminous. His earliest work was the *De laudibus sancti crucis* in which the outline of figures such as the victorious Christ, the seraphim, etc, were superimposed upon a written text with acrostic verses. The figures were 'explained' in a *declaratio* following each. For text and designs see PL 107 149–296. Cebes, one of Socrates' disciples and an interlocutor in Plato's *Phaedo*, was a sophist thought (probably wrongly) to be the author of the *Πίναξ* 'The Portrait,' which gives an imaginary picture of human life. He is mentioned in *De copia* CWE 24 582, where Erasmus comments on methods of description.

method has reached such a degree of inquisitive refinement[978] that there have actually been people who have forced mystical meanings upon the game of pawns, or chess, as it is commonly called.[979] Jerome has good reason to laugh at those who twist the tales of poets to apply to Christ – unless something is aptly turned in the direction of morals, when, for example, the tale of Proteus is directed against the fickle, the tale of Phaethon against the rash, of Tantalus against the avaricious and stingy, the tale of Midas against the stupid rich, of Danaë against justice corrupted by money, the tales of Ixion and the Danaids against those who labour in vain. For there is no doubt that the ancients invented many narratives for this purpose.[980]

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978 'Inquisitive refinement': *curiositatis*; cf *Methodus* n14, where the negative connotation of the word is noted.

979 In antiquity *ludus latrunculorum* was the name for the 'game of pawns'; cf Seneca *Epistulae morales* 106.11; and the note in Seneca *Epistles 93–124* trans Richard M. Gummere, Loeb Classical Library 77 (Cambridge MA 1971) VI 222, giving a brief descripton of the game. On the term *ludus scachorum* 'game of chess' see J.F. Niermeyer *Mediae Latinitatis lexicon minus* (Leiden 1976) SV *scacus*.

980 Cf *Enchiridion* CWE 66 67–8; also *De copia* CWE 24 610–14, where most of these stories appear allegorized, and where Erasmus notes stories invented by the poets intending a tropological or allegorical interpretation; also *Ratio* 506, in all of which Erasmus speaks favourably of allegorization. **Proteus** is the old man of the sea who transformed himself into different shapes to escape those who tried to lay hold of him (Homer *Odyssey* 4.384–570; Virgil *Georgics* 4.387–529); cf also *Adagia* II ii 74, *Parabolae* CWE 23 193, *Annotations on Romans* CWE 56 14 n9, and *Ratio* 557 with n351. **Phaethon** was the son of Apollo and Clymene, and was granted his rash request to drive the sun god's steeds across the sky, but being unable to control them perished in the attempt (Ovid *Metamorphoses* 2.19–328). **Tantalus**, whose sin was variously identified in the tradition, was punished by being placed in a pool whose waters receded when in agonizing thirst he tried to drink, and over which were branches of luscious fruit that he could never reach (Homer *Odyssey* 11.582–92). **Midas** was granted his wish that all he touched should turn to gold, so that he could neither eat nor drink (Ovid *Metamorphoses* 11.100–93). **Danaë**, fated to give birth to a son who would kill his grandfather, was locked away in a tower, but Zeus came to her in a shower of gold and impregnated her (Horace *Odes* 3.16.1–8). **Ixion**, who repeatedly dishonoured the trust placed in him, was chained to a wheel that rolled perpetually through the air (Pindar *Pythian Odes* 2.21–41; Lucian *Dialogues of the Gods* 9); cf *Parabolae* CWE 23 193. the **Danaids**, the fifty daughters of Danaus, were forced to marry their cousins, the sons of Aegyptus, but on their wedding night all but one killed their husbands and for this crime were condemned to carry water in jars perforated like sieves (Aeschylus *The Suppliant Maidens* 1–175; Lucian *Dialogues of the Sea Gods* 6); cf *Parabolae* CWE 23 173. In Ep 53.7

No mode of teaching, however, is more familiar or more effective than teaching by means of the comparison of similar things. Christ, who wanted his teaching to be in the highest degree accessible to the people, took his parables[981] from the most common things. For who has not seen seed being cast on the ground? Who has not looked upon fisherman casting their nets? Who does not know that branches dry up when cut off?[982] And these common things he makes marvellously fresh and new, adapting them to his philosophy. It belongs to the few to discuss the exceedingly acute[983] subtleties of the sons of Scotus; anyone at all is ready to philosophize in these comparisons. You see the sun arising; you rejoice. What pleasure will you feel if that sun of righteousness should arise before the eyes of your heart?[984] Disease of the body is troublesome; how much more troublesome the disease of the soul. You shrink away from the contagion of a physical plague; much more must the contagion of pestilential morals be avoided. You think a garden blooming with all sorts of flowers, flourishing with all sorts of trees an elegant thing; what a spectacle is the soul flourishing with innocence and abounding in every kind of virtue! You see a serpent; you have an example of Christian prudence. You see a dove; you have an image of Christian guilelessness.[985] You see the deer; you have a symbol suggesting the eager pursuit of divine literature. You see a lamb; you have a type of the gentleness that harms no one.[986] Winter bears down; you are admonished to bear up in adverse circumstances through the expectation of better fortune. Summer caresses; you are admonished to prepare for hardship to come. Old age is burdensome; you aspire to immortality. Youth is pleasant; you are admonished to prepare the

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Jerome characterizes as 'puerile' the efforts of some to apply the verses of Virgil to Christ; but for Jerome's efforts to turn classical literature to good use see *Antibarbari* CWE 23 91–4; also Jerome Ep 70 (in CWE 61 201–6).

981 his parables] First in *1522*; previously, 'these'

982 Cf Matt 13:3–23, Mark 4:3–20, Luke 8:5–15 (seed); Matt 13:47–50 (net); John 15:1–8 (branches).

983 exceedingly acute] Added in *1520*. The following 'sons of Scotus' renders *Scotidarum*; Erasmus uses the aggrandizing patronymic. Scotus was called *doctor subtilis* 'the subtle teacher'; cf *Paraclesis* n84.

984 For the expression 'sun of righteousness' see Mal 4:2; for 'eyes of the heart' see Eph 1:18 and the paraphrase on the verse, CWE 43 310–11; and for Erasmus' frequent appeal to the metaphor see the paraphrase on Matt 5:8 CWE 45 89 with n27 and CWE 43 219 n29. Erasmus exemplifies with this and the following images what it means to 'philosophize'; cf *Methodus* n95.

985 Cf Matt 10:16 (serpent and dove).

986 Cf Ps 42:1 (deer); Luke 10:3, Isa 53:7, and Acts 8:32 (lamb).

supports of learning and the virtues for the old age to come. Thus, whatever this visible world offers to the corporeal eyes, of this you will find the archetype[987] in the realm of the soul.

Now, the sources from which allegories are to be sought are explained by Dionysius in the work entitled *On the Divine Names*, in part by Augustine in *On Christian Doctrine* book 3, where the rules of Tychonius have been set forth and explained.[988] Tychonius, in spite of the fact that he was, in the first place, incapable of good expression and, in the second, a Donatist, Augustine holds in rather more respect than we hold certain orthodox writers. I myself shall perhaps contribute something, if I find the leisure to complete a book I began long ago on theological allegories.[989] Meanwhile, I shall add this one comment. *It is not enough to observe how in diverse things the eternal truth shines out in different ways – according to the historical sense*, which is straightforward, according to *the tropological sense*, which is concerned with morals and our life together, according to *the allegorical sense*, which investigates the hidden things of the head and the whole mystical body, according to *the anagogical sense*, which touches upon the celestial hierarchy (for I see that certain people make such a division). One must also *consider in each of these individually what levels there are, what differences, what method of treatment is there. In how many ways does Origen treat Abraham's temptation from God*, and, *although he is engaged with history, still what topics does he find*! **[98]** This is *not to mention*,

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987 'Archetype': *ideam*; the language echoes Plato, who distinguished the visible world from the world of 'ideas' or archetypes.

988 For Dionysius see *Ratio* 490–1 with nn12 and 13. In *De doctrina christiana* 3.30.42–3.37.55 Augustine describes Tychonius' rules for interpreting Scripture. These rules are introduced at a point where Augustine attempts to show how ambiguities in both literal and figurative expressions may be detected and where he has cited 'tropes,' 'allegory,' 'enigma,' and 'parable' as examples of figurative expression (3.29.40). Tychonius (fl 370–90) was an older contemporary of Augustine and a biblical commentator (though a layman) in the Donatist church of ancient North Africa, hence regarded by Augustine as a 'heretic' (3.31.44). He is best known for his 'Book of Rules,' which has survived intact and is summarized in the *De doctrina christiana*. Though a Donatist, Tychonius insisted that the church was composed of both good and bad members, and so he was condemned by a Donatist council in 380. Cf Ep 1167:297–8, where Augustine is said to have been 'delighted with Tychonius' books and his genius.'

989 Cf *Methodus* n45, where Erasmus' unfulfilled intention to write a book on Scriptural allegories is noted. At this point the *Ratio* begins to incorporate much of the latter part of the *Methodus*; cf *Methodus* n95 and *Ratio* n146. The brief definition of the four senses of Scripture that follows here receives a more elaborate analysis in *Ecclesiastes* 3 CWE 68 932–4.

meanwhile, *that* a *type receives a different shape, as it were, according to the variety of things, the diversity of times, to which it is accommodated. For example, the husks the swine feed upon*, with which in desperation the prodigal son is eager to fill his starving belly,[990] *can be made to fit riches, pleasures, honours, worldly erudition, and yet you are still engaged in tropology. Further, that whole parable can be applied to the Jewish people and the gentiles* of that time. The gentiles come to their senses, repent, and are welcomed, the Jews murmur, and their common father soothes both. And now from the variation in persons and times to which the parable is being accommodated, a virtually new face is put upon the discourse, about which I have said something above.[991] Furthermore, if anyone, perhaps, should look for a model to imitate, Origen is a most felicitous craftsman in handling allegories, while Ambrose is assiduous more than felicitous, except[992] that both are extravagant and generally more unfavourable to the historical sense than is proper.

Moreover, the theological candidate *must* especially *be advised of* this *also, that he learn to cite appropriately the testimonies of* Sacred *Scripture not from little summas* **[102]** or review lists or cheap and *trifling homiletic texts, or* other *excerpt collections* of this sort *that have been poured back and forth* and mingled together *already an infinite number of times, one deriving from another, but from the sources themselves. He should not imitate certain people who are not ashamed to twist* forceably *the oracles of the divine wisdom to a sense foreign to them, sometimes even to the opposite sense*. To save him from this, his first concern should be to learn thoroughly from those ancient interpreters the central thought of all the books of the Old and the New Testament. I have heard certain men, quite extraordinarily practised in the wrestling schools of the Sorbonne, who in a packed assembly would philosophize at length – though the theme they had in the usual manner set out had not been understood, not even to the letter, as they say – and, to the great embarrassment of learned men, they

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990 An allusion to the story of the prodigal son; cf Luke 15:3–32.

991 For the rejection of the Jews and the reception of the gentiles as the theme of the parables see *Ratio* 563–6, a passage that concludes, 'These words, spoken in a past era, belong to those ancient times; even so, they can also be applied to every period of time.' For variation in persons and times see *Ratio* 523 and 527. Cf also *Methodus* n99.

992 except ... proper.] Added in *1523*. The judgment here corresponds roughly with Erasmus' judgment elsewhere in the *Ratio*. In *1519* he found Origen 'most felicitous' both here and above (506) but was more cautious about Ambrose; cf 668 just above. In *1523* both here and above 671 he notes that both Origen and Ambrose went too far in 'imposing allegory upon the text.' However, in his *Paraphrases* on the Gospels (1522–4), Erasmus increasingly 'imposed allegory' on the text; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 249 with n1015.

would rant on, 'running beyond the olive trees,' as the Greek proverb has it.[993] *There are some who bring their* own *doctrinal formulations with them* and, imbued with popular opinions, *compel* arcane *Scripture* to serve *these, though one's own judgments should rather be sought from Scripture*. Hilary points this out with a fine turn in the first book *On the Trinity*. For him, the best reader of the divine books is one who looks for the understanding of the words from the words, rather than imposes it on them, and who has carried away more than he brought; nor does he compel the words to appear to signify the understanding he had assumed before the reading.[994] *There are some who drag Scripture to the support of public moods and mores*, and since it suits to adopt this rule when they are considering[995] *the course that should be followed, it is with the patronage of Scripture that they defend popular behaviour*.

*Furthermore it is, indeed, a less obvious but for that very reason more harmful kind of distortion when we misuse the words of Divine Scripture to interpret the church* – which is the body of Christ – *as the priests, the world* (a word that signifies evil affections)[996] *as Christian laity*, just as though these do not belong to the church; *meanwhile, applying* specifically *to monks what is said about* all *Christians*. Thus[997] we place in the world those whom Christ chose out of the world[998] and judge that those have been, as it were, removed from the world

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993 as the Greek proverb has it.] First in *1520*; previously, 'as it is said in the proverbs.' Cf *Adagia* II ii 10, where Erasmus says the proverb is applied to one who 'does or says irrelevant things that have no connection with the matter in hand'. 'Theme': *themate*; in Erasmus' discussion of preaching see the critique of the *thema* as it was advocated by the *recentiores*, *Ecclesiastes* 2 CWE 68 511–13 with n224 and CWE 67 106–8; cf also Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* II 1072–3. Erasmus may be referring to a more specific event in which he was to play an unwelcome role, an event reported in Ep 948:114–40 and the annotations on 1 Pet 4:7 (*et vigilate*); cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 135 with n564.

994 The citation from Hilary is direct and exact: 'optimus lector est qui dictorum intelligentiam exspectat ex dictis potius quam imponat et rettulerit magis quam attulerit neque cogat id videri dictis contineri quod ante lectionem praesumpserit intelligendum' *De Trinitate* 1. On the 'grandiloquence' of Hilary see the preface to Erasmus' edition of Hilary, Ep 1334:275–91.

995 when they are considering] Added in *1520*. At this point in *1519* the text became somewhat garbled as it attempted to incorporate the text of the *Methodus* with some changes and read implausibly: '… since it suits to adopt the rule of this [or, to adopt of this rule], whatever should be followed, it is with the patronage …'

996 On the word *mundus* 'world' see *Ratio* 643 with n805.

997 Thus ... living being.] The sentence was added in *1520*.

998 Cf John 15:19. Cf the letter to Paul Volz, prefatory to the 1518 edition of the *Enchiridion*: 'Now men are called monks who spend all their time in the very heart of worldly business …,' Ep 858:587–8 / CWE 66 22.

who are out of the world as much as kidneys are outside the body of a living being. *What is said about divine worship we divert to ceremonies alone; what is said about the duty of the priest we refer to the prayers alone however said*. Meanwhile,[999] with this whole explication violence is done to sacred literature, and the structure of an empty building is placed upon rotten foundations.[1000]

Accordingly, whoever wishes to use the Scriptures rightly *should not think it enough to have picked out four or five little words* without *considering rather the context from which the words arise*. Frequently the sense of this or that passage depends upon what has preceded. He should weigh carefully by whom the words are said, *to whom, the time, the occasion, the words*, the intent, *what has preceded, what follows. For it is from gathering and weighing these things that one grasps the meaning of what is said* **[103]**.

In these matters, this rule, too, must be observed, that the sense we elicit from obscure words should conform to that circle of Christian teaching, should conform to the life of Christ, finally, should conform to natural justice.[1001] Thus[1002] Paul, urging the Corinthians that women should pray with their heads veiled, men, on the other hand, with heads uncovered, appeals to nature itself as evidence.[1003]

I[1004] must here indicate the error of those who take from the sacred books (in which various things are set forth in accordance with the difference in times, circumstances, and persons)[1005] only those bits that tend to justify their own inclinations, although no one understands a human law who has not examined carefully each of its principal parts, one by one. Hear the divine word, but hear all of it. You are a bishop; you are pleased that Christ said to Peter,[1006] 'I will give to you the keys of the kingdom of heaven' [Matthew 16:19]. But mark the words spoken to him when he dissuades Christ from facing the cross: 'Get behind me, Satan, because you savour not the things that are of God, but that are of men' [Mark 8:33]. Remember what was said to the same Peter: 'Follow me' [John 21:19, 22]. You are the pope; it is gratifying

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999 Meanwhile ... foundations.] This sentence was added in *1520*.
1000 Cf 1 Cor 3:10–15.
1001 Cf *Ratio* 548 with n297 above: 'Just as his teaching in its entire orb is self-consistent, so it is consistent with his life, consistent even with the judgment of nature itself.'
1002 Thus ... evidence.] Added in *1523*
1003 Cf 1 Cor 11:4–15. Cf the *Paraphrase on Matthew* for repeated references to 'natural law,' CWE 45 133 n17, 178 n53, 232–3 with n8.
1004 I ... healing.] This paragraph was added in *1520*.
1005 For 'times, circumstances, and persons' see *Ratio* 519–27.
1006 Peter] First in *1522*; in *1520*, 'him'

to be called the vicar of Christ, but meanwhile let the example of Christ, the death of Christ, come to mind. The one who succeeds to the office and title of Christ ought to succeed to his disposition and will. You are a priest; you are flattered by the words spoken to the apostles, 'Those whose sins you forgive, are forgiven' [John 20:23]. But notice what has preceded: 'Receive the Holy Spirit' [John 20:22]; mark what was said to these same apostles, 'Go and teach all nations' [Matthew 28:19]. You are pleased that Paul says presbyters[1007] are worthy of a double honour, but add what he adds, 'who rule well' [1 Timothy 5:17]. You put to your advantage the injunction in the books of the Old Testament that tithes be given to the Levites; but add to this the command that tithes be given to those excluded from a share in the land when it was divided, that tithes be given to those who would always attend on sacred things and be free for this alone, that tithes be given to those whose portion was the Lord God.[1008] How far from all this are those who now require from the populace more than the tithe. We plume ourselves because Peter said priests are a royal race;[1009] but it does not occur to many that these same people must exhibit that of which Christ spoke: 'You are the salt of the earth; you are the light of the world' [Matthew 5:13, 14]. You are flattered because you imagine that Christ's words to Peter, 'Feed my sheep' [John 21:17] were also addressed to you; but remember, meanwhile, that he who said this demanded thrice the promise of love, even an extraordinary love, towards himself – for[1010] he says, 'Do you love me more than these?' [John 21:15]. You preside over other bishops, but you are commanded to be superior to them also in love, you are commanded by the example of the supreme pastor to

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1007 'Presbyters': *presbyteros*, as in VG and ER 1 Tim 5:17, though just above, *sacerdos es* 'You are a priest.' For *presbyterus* as equivalent to 'priest' see CWE 44 169 n25; and for Erasmus' wider use of the word see CWE 50 96 n22. In the annotation on 1 Tim 5:17 (*qui bene praesunt presbyteri*) Erasmus observes that here in 1 Timothy *presbyteri* designates 'bishop' not 'age.'

1008 For the injunction that tithes be given to the Levites see Num 18:21–4 and Deut 14:27–9; for the exclusion of the Levites from a portion of the land see Num 26:52–62; for the Levites' sacred duties, Num 3:5–13, 8:14–19, 18:2–6, 21–4; for God as their portion see Num 3:12, 8:16; for the expression see Num 18:20 (where God says to Aaron, a Levite, 'I am your portion and your inheritance') and Pss 73:26, 119:57.

1009 'Royal race': *regale genus*; cf 1 Pet 2:9, which, however, refers to 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood' (*genus electum, regale sacerdotium*; both VG and ER). On the expression 'We plume ourselves' (*cristas erigimus*) see *Adagia* I viii 69.

1010 for ... more than these?'] Added in *1522*

guard the safety of all at the cost of your own life.[1011] You rejoice that your place on earth is next to Christ, but remember that it is your duty also to be next to him in sanctity of life. If we use sacred literature in this way, then, and only then, will it bring us health and healing.

Certain people shamelessly turn the divine Scripture aside to a sense utterly foreign to it, like the man who twisted the words in Habakkuk, 'The tent-curtains of the land of Midian will tremble' [3:7].[1012] These words were spoken about the tents of the enemy, but he twisted them to refer to Bartholemew, who had been flayed, as the story goes (though the story lacks credibility).[1013] Or like the man who,[1014] with utmost folly, diverted the statement found in the book of Judith, 'Circling round the valley, they came to the gate,' to the argumentation in the four books of Peter Lombard, who wrote the theological 'sentences.'[1015] And[1016] what is even more subtle is this: he wants to see in these same words an allusion to the Lombard's name and

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1011 Cf John 10:11–15; also the paraphrase on Acts 2:14: 'The shepherd protects the flock' CWE 50 18.

1012 Erasmus follows the Vulgate, reading *pelles* 'skins (tent-curtains NRSV)' and the verb in the future tense, rather than the past (cf AV, NRSV).

1013 For the various legends of Bartholemew's missionary endeavours and martyrdom, including death by flaying and beheading, see ABD I 614 'Bartholomew.' The flaying of Bartholemew was portrayed in Renaissance art eg by Michelangelo in *The Last Judgment*; and cf the portrayal of Bartholemew with the knife, CWE 40 626 and 655 n37. The example is cited again in *Ecclesiastes* 2 CWE 68 513.

1014 who] First in *Schoeffer 1519*; previously omitted

1015 Cf Jth 13:10 (VG 13:12). Peter Lombard (c 1100–60) from Lombardy taught in the cathedral school in Paris, becoming bishop of Paris in 1154. He published extensive commentaries on the Psalms and the Pauline Epistles, but his four books of *Sententiae* (so named because they contained the *sententiae* 'opinions' of the Fathers) became a standard text for the systematic study of theology; cf *Paraclesis* n83). For an appreciation of Peter Lombard see the annotation on Matt 1:19 (*nollet eam traducere*). Erasmus speaks of him as 'a good man and for his day a learned man, one not to be despised,' but he is described in a less positive tone as the 'rhapsodist' who stitched together his book from the opinions of others, ASD VI-5 78:328–80:335. He regrets that this collection of opinions, designed to answer all questions, served only to open the door to an unending stream of questions; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 58. Elsewhere Erasmus finds occasion to commend the Lombard; cf Ep 1334:168–70, where he observes the rhapsodist's 'restraint.' Indeed, at points he makes him a useful ally; cf eg in the controversy with Lee, Erasmus' appeal to Peter Lombard in support of his designation of the angel of the annunciation as a 'groomsman' and of his view of the sacramental nature of marriage, *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* and *2* (Notes 32 and 188) CWE 72 134–5 and 300–1.

1016 And ... in earnest.] Added in *1520*

surname! I would not be reporting these things if these same persons had not published their ditties, and if people were not lacking who read such stuff eagerly and in earnest.

There are those who play with the words of Divine Scripture, and, as happens in the centos of the poets, use them, as though in sport, in a sense foreign to them.[1017] St Bernard sometimes does so – with more grace than gravity, at least in my judgment – for this distinguished man had drunk so deeply from sacred literature that Scripture appeared everywhere.[1018] Today, if some people want to seem amusing, they pervert the mystic words, turning them into scurrilous jokes, which is not only ignorant but also impious and deserves to be punished. Jerome throws in the face of Origen the charge that he sometimes does violence to the Scriptures, though I think Origen's purpose is to lead us far away from the frequently sterile letter.[1019] Rather, nearly every one of the ancients sometimes twists the Scriptures whenever

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1017 Tertullian *De praescriptione haereticorum* 39.3–5 witnesses to a custom in antiquity whereby words and clauses were taken from a classical work and placed in a new arrangement to create an entirely new work. A Christian author Proba (c 360) made a cento by taking lines and half lines from Virgil's poetry to create a poem that followed primarily the narratives of Genesis and Exodus, a work that was frequently used in schools in the Middle Ages; cf Daniel Nodes *Doctrine and Exegesis in Biblical Latin Poetry* (Leeds 1993) 12–16, 22–5, 78–82.

1018 When Georg Schirn, a Cistercian monk (of whom little is known beyond his reaction to this passage in the *Ratio*; cf CEBR III 224) read these words, his 'blood froze in [his] veins,' and he begged Erasmus, 'master of all learning,' for a letter of explanation; Ep 1142:49, 104–7 (10 September 1520). St Bernard (1090–1153) entered the Cistercian monastery of Citeaux in 1112, and in 1115 established a new house at Clairvaux, of which he became abbot. Active in ecclesiastical politics, he preached the Second Crusade (1147). His sermons on the Song of Songs, reflecting a mystical theology, became a classic of Christian spirituality. His deep knowledge of Scripture, which enabled abundant allusions, echoes, and citations throughout all his extant writings, was acknowledged by his younger contemporary, John of Salisbury (1115–80): '... he was so saturated in the Holy Scriptures that he could fully expound every subject in the words of the prophets and apostles. For he had made their speech his own, and would hardly converse or preach or write a letter except in the language of Scripture' *Historia pontificalis* 12, in Marjorie Chibnall ed and trans *The Historia Pontificalis of John of Salisbury* repr and corr (Oxford 1986) 26.

1019 Cf Jerome *Commentarius in Ieremiam prophetam* 5 (on 27.3–4 and 9). Though Jerome had originally found in Origen a congenial exegete, he became a severe critic after the accusations against Origen in Palestine in AD 393. For Erasmus' appraisal of Jerome's relation to Origen see his *Vita Hieronymi* and the preface to his edition of the *Opera omnia* II (1524) in CWE 61 33–4, 37, 100–1; cf also CWE 56 248 n15 and 95 n14, and *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* CWE 71 67 and 74.

they contend with an adversary, even Jerome himself, as he virtually confesses at one point.[1020] In these endeavours, therefore, one must observe very carefully whether any violence is being done to the sacred words – unless someone thinks it is right to do so whenever an enemy has to be taken, or the souls of the weak have to be deterred from vices.

I think the right way is to treat the sacred words appropriately and without violation. If you take care at first to do this as well as you can, later you will do so with ease besides. Although I should like this principle to be maintained everywhere, it is, nevertheless, especially appropriate to maintain it when we are dealing with an opponent of our religion, or when falsehood is being refuted and the truth affirmed, or when the sense of mystic Scripture is being expounded. Otherwise, the effect is that we not only fail to carry the point we are establishing, but we become a laughing stock to our own adversary. And yet in my opinion there is no other respect in which the ancients were more at fault.[1021]

This is the case, I think, with Ambrose in the sixth chapter of the second book *On the Holy Spirit*.[1022] Against the Arians, he infers from the passage in Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, the third chapter, 'who in spirit serve God' [3:3 DV], that the Holy Spirit is plainly called God; for he connects these two words, *πνεύματα* [spirit] and *θεῷ* [God], though a different sense is expressed by the Greek words. The Greek means rather that we worship God not with ceremonies and corporeal victims but with our spirit – especially since the definite article is not added to 'spirit,' which,[1023] it would seem,

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1020 Erasmus seems to have had no hesitation in pointing to Jerome's unscrupulous use of Scripture, particularly in his books against Jovinian and Helvidius, where Jerome himself acknowledges that his interpretations are not always consistent with one another (cf eg *Adversus Iovinianum* 1.13 and *Adversus Helvidium* 20). Erasmus notes this in eg a short addition of *1519* to his annotation on Rom 5:14 ('unto the likeness'); cf CWE 56 165 with nn28 and 30, *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 3* (Note 25) (1520) CWE 72 404–5, and extensively *Ecclesiastes* 3 (1535) CWE 68 917, 924–9.

1021 In his annotation on Phil 2:6 (*esse se aequalem Deo*) Erasmus had observed in a *1519* addition that 'nowhere do we commit greater violence against the sacred Scriptures than when in controversy with heretics we twist everything to gain a victory' ASD VI-9 290:251–3. Edward Lee, in his review of the second (1519) edition of the *Annotations* objected; in response, Erasmus cited this passage from the *Ratio*; cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 3* (Note 20) CWE 72 393–4.

1022 Cf Ambrose *De spiritu sancto* 2.5.45–7.

1023 which ... Divine Spirit.] Added in *1522*

ought to have been added at this point if he had been thinking of that Divine Spirit.[1024] Again,[1025] there is another example in Ambrose when he expounds the passage in the Second Epistle of Paul to Timothy, the second chapter, 'But in a great house there are not only vessels etc' [2:20]. With great irritation he rejects and hisses off the stage the interpretation of Novatian, who interpreted the great house of the rich man as the world, which consists of the good people and the bad. To prove his point Ambrose cites the gospel passage, 'You are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world' [John 15:19]. But this divine declaration does nothing for the case against Novatian, for Novatian was thinking of this visible world, which embraces every kind of thing, while Christ, on the other hand, figuratively designates by the 'world' the desires to which is subject the common crowd of human beings who seek temporal and fleeting things instead of eternal.[1026] And there was no reason why, through hatred of Novatian, Ambrose should have been

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1024 According to Erasmus, Ambrose argues that since the Greek reads 'who serve [the] Spirit God,' the Spirit must be equated with God, thus refuting the Arians. Although in his annotation on Phil 3:3 (*qui spiritu servimus Deo*) Erasmus from *1519* cites Ambrose's interpretation, it is not until *1535* that he adds the argument central here: that since in Greek the definite article does not precede the word 'spirit,' we cannot read 'serve *the* Spirit God,' but must read 'worship God in spirit.' In fact, the Greek witnesses vary, giving the sense of either 'worship God in the spirit' (AV) or 'worship in the Spirit of God' (NRSV). They do not, however, allow for Ambrose's interpretation. For Erasmus' criticism elsewhere of scriptural interpretations designed to exclude Arianism see the *1535* annotation on Rom 9:5 ('who is above all things God') CWE 56 243 with n6. From *1516* Erasmus emphasized the significance of the article; cf Ep 373:138–40; and three annotations on John 1:1, which he was obliged to defend against a challenge by Edward Lee, *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* (Notes 70, 75) CWE 72 172–5, 188–9; also 'New Testament Scholarship' 68 with nn274, 276.

1025 Again ... Novatian] The remainder of the paragraph was added in *1520*.

1026 Cf Ambrosiaster *Commentarius in epistolam Pauli ad Timotheum secundam* (on 2 Tim 2:20). Erasmus did not distinguish Ambrose, bishop of Milan, from Ambrosiaster the commentator; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 62 and 78 with n311. Relatively little is known of Novatian. He was a presbyter of the Roman church and wrote letters on behalf of the Roman clergy after the martyrdom of the Roman bishop Fabian in January 250. After the election of the new bishop, Cornelius, in March or April 251, Novatian, whether through jealousy or in protest against Cornelius' lax policies towards those who had lapsed in the Decian persecution, had himself consecrated bishop and so became a rival to the new pope. Though excommunicated by a Roman synod, he was able to establish his own church throughout the Roman world. This exposition of 2 Tim 2:20

vexed at a good interpretation, which even St Chrysostom follows, though he had no connection with the heresy of Novatian.[1027]

Another case: from the words of the Canaanite woman, 'Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David' [Matthew 15:22], Bede concludes and strongly affirms[1028] that with perfect faith the woman had believed that Christ was both God and man (which not even the apostles themselves, I think, had, at that time, believed). Bede[1029] bases his interpretation especially on the fact that the text goes on to say that 'she fell and worshipped Jesus'[1030] – but does everyone who addresses another with the name of lord acknowledge him as God? Is it unusual to seek help of this kind from holy men also? Does not[1031] Mephibosheth in the second book of Kings fall forward upon his face and do obeisance to King David?[1032] Is it not written of Cornelius in the Acts of the Apostles that, falling at Peter's feet, he worshipped him[1033] – and this is not to recount many other passages. It seems to me quite brash to assert rigorously anything on the basis of an argument whose refutation would occur at once even to a poorly educated man. And so that no one may falsely charge me with reporting Bede's comments in a deliberately inaccurate way, I shall add the words of Bede himself: 'For she has great fullness of faith who, entreating the kindness of the Saviour, says, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, Son of David." For since the one she calls Son of David she also calls Lord, it is crystal clear that she believed this one was true man and true God.' Soon there

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does not appear in the authentic works of Novatian either in the edition of Novatianus *Opera quae supersunt* ed G.F. Diercks, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 4 (Turnhout 1972) or in Russel J. DeSimone trans *Novatian* FOTC 67 (Washington DC 1974). It is evident, however, that a rigorist who was reluctant to extend the church's peace to the lapsed and sought a 'pure church' would prefer to understand the 'great house' with its two kinds of vessels as the world rather than the church. Cyprian Ep 55.25 directs the verse against Novatian, but in the sense that the 'great house' is indeed the church. For Erasmus' definition of the 'world' see *Ratio* n805.

1027 Cf John Chrysostom *In epistolam secundam ad Timotheum homiliae* 6 (on 2 Tim 2:20).

1028 and strongly affirms] Added in *1522*

1029 Bede ... worshipped Jesus'] Added in *1522*

1030 Cf Bede *Homiliae genuinae* 1.19 ('For the Second Sunday of Quadragesima'). 'Fell down and worshipped Jesus' conflates the Vulgate of Mark 7:25 'fell at his feet' (*procidit ad pedes*) and Matt 15:25 'worshipped him' (*adoravit eum*).

1031 Does not ... words of Bede] The remainder of this paragraph was added in *1522*.

1032 Cf 2 Sam 9:6; Erasmus cites the Vulgate, *adorat* 'do obeisance.' On the designation of this book as the book of Kings see *Ratio* n875.

1033 Cf Acts 10:25: 'falling ... worshipped'; Erasmus cites the Vulgate, *procidens ... adoravit*.

follows: 'But in this, that after many tears she at length falls upon the ground and worships him, saying, "Lord, help me!" she shows that she is not in the slightest degree doubtful about the divine majesty of the one whose power, she had learned, was to be worshipped as the power of God.'[1034] Such are the words of Bede.

Again, there is a case in Augustine on the words of the Baptist found in John, the first chapter: 'And I did not know him, but[1035] he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "He upon whom you will see the Spirit descending and remaining upon him, this is the one that baptizes with the Holy Spirit"' [1:33]. Augustine thinks these words a powerfully effective weapon for putting to rout all the hosts of the Donatists, interpreting that this alone had hitherto lain concealed from John, that Christ had reserved the authority of baptism for himself – for John knew all the rest:[1036] he[1037] knew that Jesus

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1034 The text agrees with that in PL 94 102, except for a minor variation in the second sentence, 'For since she calls the Son of David also Lord ...'

1035 but ... Holy Spirit"] Added in *1520*

1036 At this point the text in *1519* contained a sentence that was removed in *1520* when a long addition was inserted (see next note). The sentence read: 'For Christ was no more the author of baptism than of ordination, and yet a bishop consecrated by a heretic is reconsecrated – granting, meanwhile, that the sense Augustine infers is the true one.' Augustine's argument, as Erasmus presents it here, may be found in both the *De baptismo contra Donatistas* 5.13.15 (AD 400/401) and the *In Ioannis evangelium tractatus* (tractate 5; AD 406–7). Against the Donatists, who believed that the effective power of baptism resided in the minister, so that one might say that baptism was of the minister, Augustine insisted that the effective power of baptism lay in Christ, the author of Christian baptism, and was unaffected by the moral status of the minister. He argued from the passage cited here in John, addressing the notorious problem of how John could say that he did not know who Jesus was when the latter came for baptism. Augustine resolved the problem by saying that while John knew that Jesus was the Christ, it was only when the dove descended that he learned 'what he did not know' – that Christ was to be the author of, and so have authority over, 'his baptism,' ie the baptism administered by the church, whose power therefore lay in its author, not its ministers. Erasmus tackled this difficult problem raised by John's apparent ignorance in a long annotation added in *1519* (*ego nesciebam eum*), which begins by reviewing Augustine's solution; in the annotation he notes Augustine's tortured exegesis and demonstrates that his argument would have no power to convince an opponent; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 136 with n568 and *Ratio* 626 with n711. On the Donatists see n1042 below.

1037 he ...win a victory.] The remainder of this and the next two paragraphs were added in *1520*.

was the Son of God; he knew that he was God and man; he knew that he was the Christ; he knew that he had come to redeem and save the human race; he knew that he was the one who had come to baptize with water and the Holy Spirit. What, then, did the Father teach him by the sign of the dove? Doubtless this, that Christ would keep his baptism for himself and would give it over not even to any of his disciples. Now, Augustine speaks at length in this vein, and with plausibility sufficient indeed for those who were persuaded that the Donatists were mad – as indeed they were. For even the very form of the discourse shows that he had accommodated that discussion to the minds and ears of those present and to the circumstances of that time.[1038]

But if the matter were to be taken seriously, if, taking up arms, one would have to meet with an adversary in hand-to-hand combat, I do not see what force these weapons would have, though by relying on them among his own people Augustine scored a sort of triumph for himself. I do not wish for the present to probe too deeply why baptism has been permitted to all, when the administration of the other sacraments has been entrusted to so few, especially when each of the following statements was made by the same person to the same people: 'Go, baptize all nations'[1039] and 'Whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven them' [John 20:23]. Moreover, I do not intend to consider whether, just as the right to absolve is taken away, so the right to baptize can be taken away; then, whether the church cuts anyone off with the intent that afterwards he does not perform any ecclesiastical duty; further, whether Donatists believed that those who have once truly received baptism and fallen back into ungodly living have to be baptized again, or whether those who have been baptized with water in heresy and by heretics have truly received baptism. Nor do I wish to inquire[1040] whether what Augustine has propounded regarding the sacraments and the mark imprinted rests on sufficiently effective arguments.[1041] For I do not disagree at all with him on

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1038 Augustine's *De baptismo contra Donatistas* was written for Catholics at the request of 'brothers' who had demanded it (1.1.1); it was written in a tone accommodated to sympathetic readers (1.2.3). The *Tractates* were delivered in the presence of a public audience to which Augustine adjusted his style; cf the characterization of audience and style in John Rettig trans *St Augustine: Tractates on the Gospel of John 1–10* FOTC 78 (Washington DC 1988) 4–8.

1039 Cited freely from Matt 28:19

1040 Nor do I wish to inquire] First in *1522*; in *1520*, 'I shall not inquire'

1041 'Mark imprinted': *character*. Erasmus reflects Augustine's image used to illustrate his view that the 'tattoo' received at baptism, administered even by heretics, is indelible and need not be repeated; cf *De baptismo contra Donatistas* 1.4.5, *In Ioannis evangelium tractatus* 6.15.

the issue, and I regard the Donatists not only as heretics but also as schismatics and raging mad brigands.[1042] And he easily persuades me – with whatever[1043] arguments – because the authority of the church and hatred of schism persuades even without proof.

Meanwhile, we consider only whether this Gospel passage is sufficiently effectual to refute the error of the Donatists. For in the first place, what Augustine asserts and drives home so many times – that John was ignorant only of the fact that Christ was keeping baptism especially for himself – will have no effect upon the adversary. For the statement, 'This is he who baptizes' [John 1:33], does not adequately prove Augustine's claim, since the Gospel adds, 'with spirit and with fire,'[1044] distinguishing not the author of baptism but the kind of baptism. With respect to John's baptizing, he was baptizing on the authority of God.[1045] Besides, if from the words 'This is the one who baptizes' one contends that no one but Christ baptizes, how does Paul say

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1042 The Donatists arose in North Africa after the persecution of Diocletian (303–5). They took their name from Donatus, successor to their first bishop, Majorinus, who had been elected in Carthage in protest against the elevation of Caecilian, since Caecilian's consecration (a faction thought) had been invalidated by the participation of a *traditor* in his consecration ceremony – a *traditor* being regarded an apostate, as one who had handed over the Scriptures to pagan authorities during the persecution. Hence from its origin Donatist theology focused on the question whether sacraments had validity when administered by those outside the church of the Holy Spirit. By the end of the century the Donatists had become the dominant church in North Africa, and Augustine undertook to engage them on the central question of the sacraments, above all, of baptism. As Erasmus suggests, Donatists agreed that lapsed Christians did not need to be rebaptized, as did those, however, who had received baptism from heretics; they contended that since the Spirit resided only in the true church, it could not be given in baptism by those who, living as heretics outside the true church, did not possess it. For some time bands of brigands called *Circumcelliones*, who appeared to be on the Donatist side, terrorized parts of the countryside, but imperial legislation against the Donatists put the movement on the defensive; and by the early sixth century there is little evidence of their survival as a schismatic movement. See the article 'Donatus, Donatism' in Fitzgerald *Augustine* 284–7.

1043 whatever] First in *1523*; previously, 'such.' For Erasmus' repeated acknowledgment of the authority of the church in matters of doctrine and the interpretation of Scripture see CWE 56 249 n24. Cf also the Translator's Note to 'Title Pages' and 'Title Page of the *Novum Testamentum* 1519' 740–1 and 746.

1044 Erasmus conflates the text of John 1:33, 'This is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit,' with the synoptic texts of Matt 3:11 and Luke 3:16, 'He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.'

1045 Cf Matt 21:23–7; Mark 11:27–33; Luke 20:1–8.

that he baptized the household of Stephanas?[1046] How does Christ give to the apostles the mandate, 'Go and baptize,'[1047] if he alone baptizes? Nor does it immediately follow that, if Christ is the author of all the sacraments, these are for this reason conferred through anyone at all.[1048] The Donatists assumed that heretics were outside the fellowship of the church, outside of which there was no baptism. To establish this point, Cyprian uses many testimonies from the Scriptures and likewise a great many arguments, and with him many bishops whose votes are recorded in the Acts of the Synod of Carthage.[1049] For me at least, what the church has defined is in every way approved. I have brought these things forward only to show by way of example a passage that has been twisted to win a victory.

*What I am now about to say will perhaps offer an advantage of the highest importance to anyone who applies the principle with skill. It is this: either prepare for yourself or take over from someone else a number of theological headings under which you put everything you have read, placing them into something like little pigeonholes so that you might the more readily produce* or store away *what you wish, when you please – I note by way of example the subject of faith, of fasting, of enduring evils, helping the weak,* enduring ungodly magistrates, avoiding offence to the simple, the study of sacred literature, *godly devotion* to parents or children, Christian charity, honouring the leading people, envy, disparagement, chastity, *and other things of this kind* (for countless *categories can be imagined*). *Arrange these in order according to opposites or similarities, as I once pointed out in my Copia also* **[105]**. *Whatever is noteworthy anywhere in all the books of the Old Testament, in the Gospels*, in Acts, *in the apostolic Epistles, that either agrees or disagrees should be listed under the appropriate category. In fact, if anyone likes, he can bring to these topics what he deems will be of use from the*

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1046 Cf 1 Cor 1:16.

1047 Cf n1039 above.

1048 For Augustine's view that Christ is author and, with the church, minister of the sacraments see the article 'Sacraments' in Fitzgerald *Augustine* 741–7.

1049 Cyprian, bishop of Carthage (250–8), anticipated the Donatists in taking a rigorist view on the question of the rebaptism of heretics and schismatics, claiming, against Stephen of Rome, that there could be no true baptism outside the 'Catholic' church, a position he argues in Epp 69–74. Augustine correctly understood that the rigorism of Cyprian and the bishops of Carthage in the mid-third century was necessarily a key point of reference in his debate with the Donatists in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. For the Councils of Carthage (AD 255, 256) see Ferguson *Early Christianity* I 216; and for the importance of Cyprian's position in Augustine's debate with the Donatists see the article 'Cyprian of Carthage' in Fitzgerald *Augustine* 262–4.

*ancient commentators; likewise, lastly, from the books of the pagans. I rather think I notice from Jerome's own writings that he used this method* **[106]**. *If something has to be discussed, materials will be ready at hand; if something is to be clarified, a comparison of passages will be easy.*

*For in the opinion not only of Origen but of Augustine also, the best method of interpreting divine literature is this: to make an obscure passage clear through a comparison of other passages, to explain mystic Scripture from mystic Scripture* **[107]**, the sacred from the sacred. From[1050] this, indeed, not only will one reap the advantage that the meaning, not otherwise understood, will be perceived, but also authority will be added. For although the authority of Divine Scripture everywhere, even with a single word, is sufficient for us, still sometimes cases arise where there can be ambiguity about the interpretation, especially when even the ancients quite often disagree. Accordingly, if many passages agree, they will stimulate confidence; if they disagree or are even in conflict, they will arouse us to a more thorough investigation. A case[1051] in point: the Lord says, 'No flesh shall see me and live' [Exodus 33:20], and yet Luke says on the authority of Isaiah,[1052] 'All flesh shall see the salvation of God' [Luke 3:6]. Again, Paul says, 'Flesh and blood shall not possess the kingdom of God' [1 Corinthians 15:50],[1053] and yet Job's words are: 'And in my flesh I shall see my God' [19:26]. Likewise, in the Gospel Christ forbids us to be angry, and yet in the Psalms we read, 'Be angry and sin not' [4:4];[1054] hence it follows that either Christ did not have in mind just any anger at all, or the words of the psalmist must be understood not as teaching us to be angry but that if anger wells up, it should not reach the point of becoming injurious. Likewise, here is a case: Christ at one point allows his disciples to take staff and wallet for their journey; elsewhere again he forbids them even these.[1055]

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1050 From ... arcane discourse.] The remainder of this paragraph and the next two paragraphs were added in *1520*, with the exception of a short insertion in *1522*; cf next note.

1051 A case ... Likewise] Added in *1522*

1052 Cf Isa 40:5, 52:10. In citing from Exodus Erasmus substituted *omnis caro* for the Vulgate's *homo*, thus sharpening the contrast between 'no flesh' and 'all flesh.' For the Hebrew idiom that speaks of 'man' as 'flesh' see *Ratio* 647 with n825.

1053 Erasmus cites the Vulgate, possibly from memory, mingling 1 Cor 15:50b and 15:50c.

1054 Cf Matt 5:22; and Ps 4:4, which is cited in Eph 4:26.

1055 Staff is forbidden in Matt 10:10 and Luke 9:3; it is permitted in Mark 6:8. Wallet is forbidden in Matt 10:10, Mark 6:8, Luke 9:3; it is permitted in Luke 22:36. In general, compare the earlier discussion on apparently contradictory statements in Scripture, *Ratio* 557 with n352.

This contradiction lies sometimes only in the words, sometimes in deeds, sometimes in a mixture of both. I have just given an example of contradiction in words. Concerning deeds, this can be an example: though Peter patiently endured whipping and imprisonment by the Jews, he did not extend the same mildness to Ananias and his wife Sapphira, but when he had sharply rebuked them, he announced to them their immediate end.[1056] Again, with mildness and gentleness he calls an unbelieving people back to their senses to repent; Ananias and Sapphira he does not likewise urge to repent but punishes them on the spot. And yet he does not punish Simon, who was about to buy the gift of the Holy Spirit although he had already been baptized, but admonishes him to come to his senses and repent, holding out to him some hope of pardon if he changed.[1057]

The following can serve to exemplify the mixed genre: Christ in the Gospel forbids all oaths, and yet Paul swears so many times in his Epistles.[1058] Christ bids us turn the left cheek to one who strikes us on the right; he himself, when struck at his trial, even expostulated with the striker. So far is Paul from offering the other cheek that, in return for a blow, he hurls at the high priest, his judge, a rebuke that was not much more gentle than a blow.[1059] Likewise, when we read, 'You will destroy all who speak a lie' [Psalm 5:6], yet we read that certain excellent persons employed the lie, like Abraham and Judith.[1060] In these cases, therefore, the deeds of the saints, contradicting as it seems the teaching of the sacred books, remind us that there lies

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1056 Cf Acts 5:17–21, 40 (imprisonment and beating), 5:1–11 (Ananias and Sapphira). The paraphrase on Acts 5:6 CWE 50 39–40 attempts to explain and justify Peter's harshness towards Ananias and Sapphira.

1057 Cf Acts 2:37–40, 3:17–26 (repentance offered to an unbelieving people), 8:9–24 (Simon). Erasmus stresses the gentleness of Peter in the paraphrase on Acts 2:37–40 CWE 50 22. Erasmus' stress in the *Ratio* on the gentleness of the apostles is clearly directed towards clergy of the sixteenth century; cf also *Ratio* 576–8.

1058 Cf Matt 5:34 (the prohibition); 2 Cor 1:23, but also Rom 1:9 and 9:1, 1 Tim 2:7 (a variant included in Erasmus' text; Paul swears).

1059 Cf Matt 5:39 (turn the left cheek); John 18:23 (Jesus expostulated); Acts 23:2–3 (Paul rebukes). The exegetical tradition offered a range of solutions to the apparent contradiction between the apostle's action and gospel precepts; cf CWE 50 133 n5. Erasmus flatly rejected Edward Lee's solution, *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 2* (Note 132) CWE 72 261–2.

1060 Cf Gen 20:2–13 (Abraham); Jth 10:11–13, 11:1–19 (Judith). Alberto Pio misquoted this passage to make Erasmus say that 'certain excellent persons were liars.' Erasmus insisted on the text as written here: 'Certain excellent persons employed the lie' CWE 84 355 nn1449, 1450.

in the words a different sense from the one the discourse projects at first glance. Moreover, this comparison of passages will bring the further benefit that we shall recognize with more certainty the idioms and tropes of arcane discourse.[1061]

*And now, furnished with these things, let* our theological tiro[1062] *engage in constant meditation on divine literature, let him 'take care to turn by night, by day' its pages* **[108]**. *Let him have the Scriptures always in hand, always in pocket* **[109]**; *from Scripture let something always sound in his ears or meet his eyes or hover within his mind*. What has been fixed deep within through constant use will become a part of one's nature. In my opinion, *it will not be ill-advised to learn the divine books word for word* even though they are not understood. For this opinion Augustine is my authority; by the words 'even though not understood,' I take him to mean, 'even if you do not yet catch the mystic sense.'[1063] For to do what we see being done among some monks, and to learn the Psalms exactly as parrots learn the words of human beings, has more tedium than benefit. Things we understand stick[1064] in the memory not only more readily and more tenaciously but also with greater usefulness.

I should like this memorization to be done first with *the books of the New Testament, which contribute so much more effectively to our profession that today they can* almost[1065] *suffice even by themselves*, now that, clearly, the teaching of Christ has been spread abroad and implanted in the minds of all. For long ago it was necessary to appeal to the authority of the Old Testament to lead the Jews to the faith. Now we have little to do with the Jews, and for other people the books of the Hebrews do not have the same authority, though I would not deny that the greatest benefit is received from those books if anyone, by applying allegory, accommodates them either to the Christ sketched out in them or to morals[1066] – and if one does so not to excess but now and then. There are some passages to which it is silly to apply allegory verbatim, because many details are put in not to add some special meaning but to

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1061 Erasmus discussed idioms, tropes, and the hidden sense of Scripture extensively above; cf *Ratio* 632–67.

1062 our theological tiro] First in *1522*; previously, 'him'

1063 Cf Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 2.9: 'Our first concern is to know those books even though they are not yet understood.'

1064 stick] In all editions except *Schoeffer 1519*, which reads, 'will have stuck.' On the 'psalm-mumblers' of the previous sentence see 598 with n577.

1065 almost] Added in *1522*

1066 A reference to allegorical and tropological exegesis; cf *Ratio* 677–8 and *Methodus* n96.

maintain the course and sequence of the narrative; so[1067] Augustine teaches, and along with him John Chrysostom in the sixty-fifth homily on Matthew, where he expounds the parable of the men hired for the vineyard.[1068] With us, therefore, the first place of honour should be given to the New Testament, through which we are Christians and where Christ is much more distinctly portrayed for us than in the Old; the next place to the Old, and in *the Old to those* books *that have a particularly close correspondence to the New*, like the books[1069] of *Isaiah*. *And yet if, by arranging passages as I have said*,[1070] *you frequently compare* the *Paul*ine Epistles *with the Gospels, and compare Isaiah and the rest of the Old Testament passages with both, these will of their own accord stick in the memory and become fixed there*.

*If this labour deters some people, I ask that each reflect on this: how is it appropriate that the future theologian commit to memory the petty rules of sophistic, commit to memory commentaries on Aristotle (such as they are )* – or even a paraphrase – *commit to memory the so-called 'conclusions' and arguments of Scotus,*[1071] *but is reluctant to bestow the same effort upon the divine books, from whose springs all theology flows – such, at least, as truly is theology. But how much more satisfying it is to swallow this labour (not to say 'tedium') once and for all than to have recourse to dictionaries, summaries, and indexes – with labour ever recurring* in endless round – *whenever you have to cite or discuss something*! They do as certain people like myself do, *who, having no dishes at home, whenever they*

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1067 so ... vineyard] Added in *1522*

1068 Cf Augustine *In psalmum* 8.13; John Chrysostom *In Matthaeum evangelistam homiliae* 64 3 (on 20:1–16). For the parable see Matt 20:1–16. Compare Erasmus' criticism of overallegorization, *Ratio* 667–74.

1069 'Books': *libri*, probably an inadvertent error for 'book'; possibly a careless reflection of Jerome's 'books' of commentary on Isaiah.

1070 An allusion to the topical arrangement of biblical material just above; cf 690.

1071 For commentaries on Aristotle from antiquity to the Renaissance see the articles 'Aristotelianism, Medieval,' and 'Aristotelianism, Renaissance' in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* ed Edward Craig, 10 vols (London 1998) I 393–413; also Berlioz *Sources* 51–9. The strong tradition of commentary and paraphrase continued to Erasmus' time. Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples, humanist and biblical scholar, began his career with the publication of paraphrases and commentaries on Aristotle; cf CEBR II 315–16. Erasmus expresses contempt for the 'conclusions' of the scholastics – 'marvels of rhythm and harmony' *Vita Hieronymi* CWE 61 52. Scotus' method was to proceed from arguments to conclusions, though the conclusions themselves might summarize the arguments. For his study of the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle Scotus provided an entire book of more than three hundred 'conclusions'; cf Scotus *Opera omnia* 4 465–95. *Conclusio* was, in fact, a term commonly used in the sense of 'thesis.'

*need goblet or plate beg their neighbour for one to use*. But our wise man rightly advises to drink water from your own well.[1072] So far should you be from any necessity to beg from someone else that you will rather draw from your own spring to give to others. Therefore, passing by those jumbled formularies and the sullied pools of summaries,[1073] *make your own breast a library of Christ*. As the prudent head of a household, *bring forth from it as from a storehouse things new or old*,[1074] *as the occasion demands. Things penetrate the minds of the hearers in a much more lively way when they come forth from your own heart, as though with the vigour of life, than when they are filched from the mishmash of others*.

But meanwhile *someone asks, 'Well, surely* for your part *you don't think Divine Scripture so easy* and accessible *that it can be understood apart from commentaries?' Why not* to some extent, that is,[1075] to the degree sufficient not for theatrical display but for sound teaching, *if its teachings have been learned first, and that comparison of passages, as I have described, has been applied? In any case, what else have they done who* were the *first* to *publish commentaries on Divine Scripture. Chief among these is Origen*, who so began to weave this lovely web that no one after him dared to put a hand to it. Then[1076] Tertullian, older than Origen, and a man so prodigiously learned in Divine Scripture that Cyprian with good reason used to call him his master.[1077] *What prevents others from arriving at the same goal as these if they proceed by the same path?*

I do not say these things because I want to give authority to anyone to pass over the commentaries of the ancients and to claim or even hunt for himself a knowledge of Divine Scripture. *Rather let the labour of the ancients save us from part of the work, let us find assistance in their commentaries, provided,*

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1072 Cf Prov 5:15.

1073 'Formularies … summaries': Cf *Methodus*: 'dictionaries, summaries, and indexes' 448 with n112. For a description of these types of books, so much despised by Erasmus, see *Methodus* nn40 and 102, and the reference in n40 to CWE 40 832–7.

1074 Cf Matt 13:52.

1075 that is ... sound teaching] Added in *1522*

1076 Then ... master.] Added in *1522*

1077 Tertullian, whose precise dates are unknown, was active as a prolific Christian author in Carthage between AD 197 and 213 or possibly even a decade later; for Origen cf *Methodus* 449 with n114. Tertullian did not write commentaries as such, but his work is replete with biblical quotations that receive exposition and commentary *in cursu*. The *editio princeps* of his work was published in 1521; cf *Ratio* 516 with n121. The famous statement of Cyprian (cf *Ratio* n1049) is recorded in Jerome *De viris illustribus* 53. For Origen as an exegete see the *1523* addition, n1084 just below.

*first, that we choose the best of them, for example, Origen, who is so far ahead that no one else can be compared to him; after him, Basil, Nazianzus, Athanasius, Cyril, Chrysostom, Jerome, Ambrose, Hilary, Augustine* **[114]***; second, that we read even these with judgment and discrimination*, though I want them to be read with respect. *They were men: certain things they did not know; at points their minds wandered; sometimes they were nodding; they conceded some things to the heretics in order to overcome them in any way at all (for at that time all things were seething with the contentions of the heretics);* certain[1078] things they imparted for the ears of those to whom they were then speaking.

*Moreover, to virtually everyone of these are falsely ascribed many titles that are in circulation; and, indeed (what is more shameful) in their books many passages have been added by others – as, in the case of Jerome, at least, I have publicly demonstrated* **[115]**, and then in Cyprian,[1079] and I shall perhaps demonstrate the same thing in Augustine.[1080] It would not be that much trouble to do the same with the rest, that is, with Origen, Ambrose, and Chrysostom.[1081] But here, too, *if the reader does not have eyes for cases like this, there is a danger that he will*

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1078 certain ... then speaking.] Added in *1523*. Cf *Ratio* n1038.

1079 and then in Cyprian] Added in *1520*. Erasmus published an edition of Cyprian in 1520; cf *Ratio* 516 with n123. Erasmus was aware of problems of authenticity in the Cyprianic corpus. The most notable case in point, however, was Erasmus' acceptance of the commentary by Rufinus on the *Symbolum fidei* (Apostles' Creed). In his letter prefatory to the edition he recognized that the 'work was current among St Jerome's works under the name of Rufinus' (Ep 1000:37–9), but he continued to acknowledge Cyprian as author as late as 1531/1532, when he published the *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* (cf CWE 82 116 with nn404 and 128 with n457), and again in 1533 in the *Explanatio symboli* (cf CWE 70 235 and 254–7). In 1535, however, when he published his final edition of the New Testament, he definitively declared Rufinus as the author of the work and gave reasons for his view in the annotation on 1 Cor 15:22 (*in Christo omnes vivificabuntur*). Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 371 with n1599.

1080 In 1517 Erasmus began to prepare a new edition of Augustine. The abundance of citations from Augustine in the *Annotations* of *1519* suggests that Erasmus had done significant work on Augustine by that time, but the edition was fully completed only in 1529; for indications of the stages of development over the decade see 'New Testament Scholarship' 132 with n555, 194 with n754 and 326–7 with n1391. Indeed, in 1516, in the Prefaces to the Jerome edition II parts 1 and 3, Erasmus had virtually lampooned the tendency to attribute spurious works to Augustine and others; cf CWE 61 73 and 86–90 (in CWE the preface to part 3 is partially excerpted as Ep 326 and dated March 1515).

1081 Erasmus illustrates false attributions in some of the references in the preceding note; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 132 n555 and CWE 61 73 and 86–90. In his annotations of *1516* he expresses doubts about the authorship of works

*take the whim of an imposter or fool as an oracle of Jerome or Ambrose*. Thus, today certain men 'praise those whose thoughts rise higher than the sun.' So says Jerome in a certain discourse, so Augustine in one of his homilies, homily 'To the Hermit Brethren' as though such men were pronouncing an oracle from a tripod.[1082]

A choice should, therefore, be made not only of authors but also of works. And among authors there is not only this distinction, that the Greeks surpass the Latin writers, the ancients the recent, but also that even in individual characteristics one is better than another. For[1083] example, no one is more instructive than Origen, no one treats commonplaces more felicitously than John Chrysostom, in the exposition of sacred literature Jerome has deserved no ordinary praise, Thomas is very clear, Scotus quite subtle and studied.[1084] You must take care among works not to take for genuine and true something that is bastard and supposititious.

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attributed to both Origen and Chrysostom; for Origen see the annotation on Luke 1:3 (*assequuto omnia*) ASD VI-5 446:150–2; for Chrysostom, the annotation on 1 Cor 7:2 (*uxori vir debitum reddat*) ASD VI-8 124:425–7.

1082 In spite of Holborn's footnote, the identification of these references remains uncertain. In the Jerome edition, preface to II part 3, Erasmus recognized as spurious the homily 'To the Hermit Brethren' CWE 61 87. The quotation 'praise those … sun' is printed in Greek and 'may go back ultimately to the familiar joke in Aristophanes *Clouds* 225 cited by Jerome *Commentarius in epistolam ad Titum* 2:15' (quoted from Alexander Dalzell in personal correspondence). Cf *Contra morosos* paragraph 82 with n212. The oracles of Apollo at Delphi were uttered by a priestess sitting on the lid of a pot-shaped vessel placed on a tripod; cf Virgil *Aeneid* 3.84–93.

1083 For ... studied.] Added in *1523*

1084 Erasmus describes Origen's exegetical method in the preface to his Latin translation of a fragment of Origen's *Commentary on Matthew*, Ep 1844:10–57 (1527). Origen's skill as a teacher was celebrated by one of his own students; cf Gregory of Thaumaturgus 'Address of Thanksgiving.' Erasmus on several occasions noted Chrysostom's fondness for commonplaces; cf eg Allen Ep 2493:85–90 (1531). And for a striking analysis of Chrysostom's exegetical method see Ep 1800:167–200. For Jerome see the *Vita Hieronymi* CWE 61 47 and 52–3. Thomas Aquinas sometimes – especially in comparison with the other moderns – commands Erasmus' respect; cf eg *Methodus* 431 with n29, where he is said to be the 'most assiduous of all the moderns'; and the annotation on Rom 1:4 ('who was predestined'), where Thomas' diligence, ability, and learning are praised; 'clarity' here adds a fresh facet to the characterization. Erasmus usually speaks of Scotus as a theologian whose subtleties he disdains (cf eg CWE 39 227–31 with n190); indeed the disinterest of Scotists in biblical exegesis is implied in

Accordingly, *since* there is not the leisure *to go through* everything – for there is such a great number of books, and time is so fleeting – it remains that first of all *we read the best. What does one gain by investing good time badly in these neoterics, who are more truly compilers than interpreters? In the first place, how many things there are in these that you must afterwards unlearn with greater effort! Secondly, if there is anything good in them, you will find that it has been drawn from the ancients but* generally *maimed and mutilated, because the moderns have been compelled on account of their ignorance of languages and essential subjects* **[117]** *to omit many things (and these possibly the best) since they did not understand them. What of the fact that a good many of them do not even gather their materials from the ancients but filch them from collections that have themselves quite often been* mingled[1085] *and mixed together, as though they had been drawn from the very last of a series of pools, so that they taste almost nothing like their source*? Further, to prevent the appearance of having contributed nothing of their own, these people add a sprinkling of their own fantasies or mix in something from some cheap author born but a day ago – as 'when a cook mixes many sauces together,' as Plautus says.[1086] *Finally, granted that they teach the same things* as the early writers, *how frigid all things are with them, how mean they seem because of the most ineloquent stammering* **[118]** of their speech! *But Jerome so seasons and enriches all things with sweet delights that when he wanders from the truth* or *digresses from the subject, he still teaches more that is good than they do when they deliver the subject correctly – not to mention further that we ourselves do become altogether like the authors with whom we are constantly engaged. For the properties of foods are not transferred into the condition of our body in the same way as reading affects the mind and character* of the reader. *If we are occupied with dry, frigid, artificial, thorny, and quarrelsome writers, we will inevitably become like them. But if we are occupied with those who truly* taste of *Christ, who glow, who are alive* and active, *who both teach and manifest true godliness, we shall resemble these, at least to some degree.*

*But, you will say, if there is nothing further, I shall be inadequately prepared for the scholastic palaestra. Well, we are training not a pugilist but a theologian, and*

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*Moria* CWE 27 133, where Erasmus presents an octogenarian, 'a reincarnation of Scotus himself.' For Erasmus' reaction to Thomas More's appraisal of Scotus and Thomas see Ep 1211:455–82.

1085 mingled] First in *1520*; previously as in the *Methodus*, *collectis* 'gathered.' The 1520 text permitted a word play in Latin: *confusis ac transfusis*.

1086 Cf Plautus *Mostellaria* 277, and for the context 273–7: for a woman the best smell is no smell at all. When perfume and sweat are mixed together, how unpleasant the smell – as when a cook mixes all kinds of sauces together!

*a theologian who prefers to express with his life rather than in syllogisms what he professes. There is no reason why you should be so greatly displeased with yourself if among those* **[119]** you are regarded as *not much of a theologian, since among them not even Jerome himself would have any response to make, possibly not even our very Paul. At fault is not theology itself, which was not created thus, but its treatment by certain individuals who have dragged down that entire discipline to the subtleties of dialectics and to Aristotelian philosophy, so that there is much more philosophy than theology there. And yet it is possible for some rhetorician or mathematician or musician to discuss the same thing in such a way that no one will now understand it except one who has first learned the whole essence of these disciplines. But why is it necessary for the theologian to make definitive responses to all the petty questions of everyone? Of these there is neither number nor measure nor end, while a thousand spring forth afresh, like the hydra's head for every one lopped off* **[120]**.

*There are some things it is not really pious to investigate; there are some things of which we can be ignorant without any cost to our salvation; in the case of some things, greater erudition is revealed by being doubtful and, with the Academics, by withholding judgment* **[121]** *than by making a pronouncement*. For what is the profit if I torture myself about whether God is able to create a person without sin;[1087] whether God is one when one [of the persons] has been distinguished from him; whether it is possible to establish relation without foundation and termination;[1088] whether the soul of Christ could have been duped or could have deceived; whether this proposition, 'God is a beetle,' is as possible as this one, 'God is a man'; whether[1089] the power of generation in the Father is

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1087 In *1519* Erasmus added to the brief annotation of *1516* on 1 Tim 1:6 (*in vaniloquium*) a long list of 'foolish' questions of the kind debated in scholastic theology; virtually all the questions posed here both in the *1519* text and in the *1522* addition (cf n1089) can be found in that annotation, some of them repeated almost verbatim. For a mocking description of the 'vain questions' of the theologians see *Moria* CWE 27 126–30, a description that, with only a few exceptions, belongs to the edition of 1511. In *De praeparatione* CWE 70 440–2 (1534) Erasmus shows that 'Satan' uses questions of this kind to destroy the faith of Christians on their deathbed. Cf *De philosophia evangelica* in 'Separate Latin Editions' 729–30 with nn9 and 10.

1088 'Establish relation without foundation and termination': For the language see the scholium (with added commentary) on *Sententiae* IV dist 12, quaest 1 in Scotus *Opera omnia* 8 716. 'Relation' renders *respectus*, defined in this scholium as *essentialiter habitudo inter duo extrema*.

1089 whether ... same kind as ours.] The remainder of the paragraph was added in *1522*. At this point Erasmus introduced into the *1519* text large insertions in *1520*, *1522*, and (one) in *1523*. The *1519* text continues on 710 (cf n1137), which

something absolute in him or a quality of the Father; whether the Persons are established in their personhood through relations of origin; whether all the ages of eternity make one age; whether grace and charity are different; whether grace is in the essence of the soul or in its potential;[1090] whether the body was formed and quickened before the Word was enfleshed; whether the soul of Christ was given the highest grace that can be bestowed upon a creature;[1091] whether the soul of Christ knows all things in the Word that the Word itself knows;[1092] whether the soul of Christ grieved at the moment of its conception; whether the fire of hell is of the same kind as ours.

Some[1093] things it is enough to have investigated to a limited degree; to pry too far is forbidden. St John Chrysostom[1094] in the tenth homily on John's Gospel thinks it sufficient for us to have learned that in the person of Christ the divine nature had been joined together with the human body and soul in some ineffable bonding, such that the same hypostasis embraced natures distinct from one another – but he does not think we should further examine how this was done. He says, 'Do not, then, seek the "how" of this;

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thus reads: '… whether this proposition, "God is a beetle," is as possible as this one, "God is a man." It has been said, "Search the Scriptures," [John 5:39] not that we might always doubt but that we might cease to doubt. Not that I entirely condemn this sort of exercise; there are many things even in the books of the neoterics worth learning, but they should be treated in a manner suitable to one's age …' For this text as partially incorporated into the *1520* addition cf n1116 below.

1090 For the debate whether grace is in the soul as essence or potential see Scotus *Quaestiones in libro* II *Sententiarum* dist 26, quaest 1 in Scotus *Opera omnia* 6.2 897–900, where the question arises from a consideration of the prior question, 'What grace was given to Adam and Eve to help them resist evil?'

1091 See the scholium (and the added commentary) to Scotus' commentary on *Sententiae* III dist 13, quaest 4 in Scotus *Opera omnia* 7.1 266–7; assuming that Christ was 'made a little lower than the angels,' one might argue that his soul did not have the capacity to receive the highest grace. The scholium proves the argument false. See further the more extensive debate in the commentary on *Sententiae* III dist 13, quaest 1–2 in ibidem 7.1 258–60.

1092 The debate on this question is reflected in Scotus' commentary on the *Sententiae* III dist 14, quaest 2 in the *Reportata Parisiensia* in Scotus *Opera omnia* 11.1 469–74.

1093 Some ... predecessors.] This paragraph was added in *1520*, the first in a long addition, later broken by insertions in *1522* and *1523*; for the continuous *1520* text see nn1101, 1112, and 1133; the *1520* insertion concludes at n1137, where the *1519* text resumes.

1094 John Chrysostom] First in *1522*; in *1520*, 'Ambrose'

it happened as Christ himself knows.'[1095] But among us how many questions have arisen, how many opinions, how many factions of those who dispute whether Christ assumed human nature in general or in its individual particularity, or whether he is in some third way called God and man. And though there was little agreement on this subject among the ancients, a certain man has recently also arisen and shown a new way, rejecting the opinions of his predecessors.[1096]

In[1097] his fourth homily on Matthew, Chrysostom also shows that the evangelist did not dare rashly to define anything about the nativity of Christ according to the flesh. Matthew demonstrates only that the Holy Spirit was the artificer of that marvellous conception, and in this way the evangelist succinctly freed himself from all questions. Chrysostom says, 'What the omnipotent Spirit of God has done is not incredible.'[1098] What that Spirit has accomplished by its own hidden plan is to us inscrutable.[1099] For us it is enough to believe, to retain, to revere what has been written. In the same passage Chrysostom very much wonders at the rashness, or rather, the madness (as he calls it) of those who delve into that eternal nativity by which he is begotten outside of time and which no human words are able to express nor is any

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1095 Cf Chrysostom *In Ioannem evangelistam homiliae* 11.2 (on the words of John 1:14, 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us'). Erasmus had several occasions to discuss the term 'hypostasis' in relation to the human and divine nature of Christ; cf eg his debate with Lefèvre, *Apologia ad Fabrum* CWE 83 26–31, the annotation on Rom 1:4 ('with power') CWE 56 16 with n4, and the debate with Lee, *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 3* (Note 22) CWE 72 395–6. In the *Explanatio symboli* he reviewed the ancient 'spectral errors' that attempted to account for the relation of the human and divine in Christ; cf CWE 70 293–8. For the Christological debates in Christian antiquity see J.N.D. Kelly *Early Christian Doctrines* 5th ed (London 1977) 280–343.

1096 The 'certain man' has not been identified. But for the variations in Christological doctrine in the late medieval period see Heiko Oberman *The Harvest of Medieval Theology: Gabriel Biel and Late Medieval Nominalism* (Cambridge MA 1963) 251–8; for the view that 'not human nature but a human person was taken [ie assumed] into the divine Person' see ibidem 251.

1097 In ... part of their labours.] This paragraph was added in *1522*.

1098 Chrysostom *In Matthaeum evangelistam homiliae* 4.3 (on Matt 1:18, 'She was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit' NRSV). In this passage the citation from Chrysostom is paraphrastic, though Erasmus remains faithful to the tenor of the writer.

1099 Cf Rom 11:33; and the paraphrases on those verses, CWE 42 68; also the annotations on Rom 11:33 ('incomprehensible' and 'untraceable').

human mind able to conceive.[1100] But if this opinion from a most holy man were one we accepted, clearly we would regard a good part of scholastic theology superfluous, and those who strive for a knowledge of sacred doctrine would be relieved of the largest part of their labours.

If[1101] these were activities undertaken for amusement in conversations and at dinner parties, one could put up with them. As it is, these things are both taught and learned in the schools; in these labyrinthine puzzles[1102] the life of the young and even of the old is wasted, as though these were matters especially worthy of a theologian. These are preferred to the writings of Jerome, Ambrose, Cyprian, and Hilary, and,[1103] indeed, to the divine books. If people give some proof of themselves in these trifles, they become bachelors[1104] without having read a Gospel or the Pauline Epistles. And yet, the more recent theologians seem to have exerted themselves especially to this end, that they might appear to have added something to the ancients. To me, it seems not only superfluous but also dangerous so anxiously to investigate with human argumentation things that belong to matters of faith. For one seems to have some doubts who draws together with such solicitude and such investigative diligence the arguments with which one may either attack or defend what has been handed down to us[1105] – handed down not so that we might dispute, but that we might believe. And it often happens that when one is tracking everything down with inquisitive diligence more than with piety, certain considerations arise that shake and uproot the solid core of faith. I myself know some people who used to admit that they were led so far by the subtleties with which Scotus treats the subject of the Eucharist that they absolutely were wavering and were scarcely able to free themselves from their perplexity.

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1100 The nativity 'outside time' implies a contrast with the 'nativity according to the flesh' mentioned just above. For the 'double nativity' of Christ see the paraphrase on Acts 8:34–6 CWE 50 62 with n55.

1101 If ... in every respect.] This paragraph and the first sentence of the next were added in *1520*, except for a short addition in *1522*; cf n1103.

1102 labyrinthine puzzles] First in *1523*; previously, 'trifles'

1103 and ... Pauline Epistles.] Added in *1522*

1104 The 'bachelor' was a pupil-teacher. A student who had studied for several years, had received a licence to lecture on a chapter or a book, and had completed the lectures was a baccalaureate; cf Rashdall *Universities of Europe* I 220; Piltz *Medieval Learning* 143.

1105 A reference to the scholastic method of giving the arguments pro and con in the discussion of theological propositions

I should not ask anyone to trust me if it were not that St Chrysostom agrees with me in every respect. For[1106] in the first homily on Matthew, it is on this count that he warns us against the books of the philosophers.[1107] They do, indeed, discuss virtue, but in a confusing and tiresome way, as when Stoics, Epicureans, Academics, and Peripatetics contend among themselves with intricate disputes about what is the honourable and in what lies the good.[1108] Further, though virtue is something to be practised, these spend their whole life investigating what it is. Certain things, therefore, are harmful simply because they are taught in a way that is verbose and obscurely involved, though Christ wanted his teaching to be completely straightforward, and easy and accessible even to farmers. He sets forth his teaching in words few and clear: 'You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart and your neighbour as yourself' [Luke 10:27]. Surely someone who prattles on with so many subtleties about the nature of God and raises so many complicated questions[1109] on the subject of charity – what it is, how it is received, where and to what extent it is appropriate to manifest it – is harmful by the very fact that he delays the person who is hastening to the thing itself? And love itself you would more quickly find among simple, uneducated people than among those who endlessly debate.

Sometime ago, I happened to be debating with a certain theologian, in other respects a learned and irreproachable man, but one who had been

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1106 For ... but also] The remainder of this paragraph, the next paragraph, and part of the first sentence of the third were added in *1522*. The *1520* text continues at n1112.

1107 Cf Chrysostom *In Matthaeum evangelistam homiliae* 1.4–5, a passage whose central ideas are reflected throughout this paragraph.

1108 'The good': *τὸ ἀγαθόν*. For three of these schools of philosophy, dominant during the Hellenistic and classical Roman periods, see *Ratio* 491 with n14. The Epicurean school was established by Epicurus (341–270 BC) who found the chief good in pleasure, which, properly understood, determined the nature of the virtues. The disputes of these schools on the topics of the honourable, the good, and virtue are partially represented in such philosophical writings of Cicero as *De officiis*, *De finibus*, and *Tusculan Disputations* 5. Erasmus published editions of the first (1501; rev 1520) and the last (1523); cf the preface to each edition (Epp 152, 1013, 1390). Erasmus believed that Cicero offered a refreshing clarification of the subtleties of the medieval schools that discussed these issues; cf Ep 1013:43–7. For the discussions of the medieval schools see eg that on *bonitas* 'goodness' in Scotus *Opera omnia* 12 474–86 (*Quaestiones quodlibetales* quaest 18).

1109 'Raises so many complicated questions': *scirpos nectit*, literally, 'plaits rushes' – an image for intricacy in thought and expression; cf Gellius *Noctes Atticae* 12.6.1.

far too long occupied with the subtleties of Scotus.[1110] Our subject was the sacraments, and there was not much on which we agreed. Turning to one who was seated beside him, he said, 'If this fellow[1111] should bend his efforts towards teaching Greek to someone, he would not be able to accomplish this in a few days. And how can he himself possibly understand at once what a sacrament is?' A fine thing it is, indeed, if for ten long years we must debate what a sacrament is when the benefit of the sacraments is essential for everyone's salvation!

Chrysostom also censures disputation among Christians that is more truly philosophical and clever than godly, not only in many other places, but also when[1112] he expounds the passage in Paul in which the latter warns Timothy against fables and interminable genealogies.[1113] It will be better, I think, to set down Chrysostom's words: 'Do you see,' he says, 'how Paul condemns inquiries of this sort and tries to cut them off? For where there is faith, there is no need for searching. Where the restless investigation of anything is unnecessary, what need is there for inquiry? Searching does away with faith, for one who searches has not yet found; one who searches is able to believe only with difficulty. For this reason Paul urges us not to be occupied with inquiries like this. For if we are seeking, we are no longer believing, for faith puts at rest our mind and our thinking.' Then, at those who throw in our faces the shifty excuse that Christ himself has bidden us to seek in order that we might find, to knock in order that the door might be opened, to search the Scriptures wherein we find life,[1114] Chrysostom hurls this retort, that the seekers are those who are engaged with great ardour of soul in the sacred books rather than in the petty questions of human beings; who ask God with pure prayers that he impart his Spirit, which searches in us even the deep things of God;[1115] by saying that we have been ordered to search, not because we should be always seeking, but for this reason, that

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1110 The man remains unidentified.

1111 this fellow] First in *1523*; in *1522*, 'Erasmus'

1112 but also when … superstitious multitude?] Added in *1520*. The addition includes the remainder of this and the subsequent three paragraphs; cf n1127, but for a significant revision in *1522*/*1523* see n1125.

1113 Cf 1 Tim 1:4.

1114 Cf Matt 7:7, Luke 11:9 (seek, knock); John 5:39 (search the Scriptures).

1115 of God] Omitted in *1522*. The clause echoes the Vulgate of 1 Cor 2:10.

we should cease to seek when we have been assured by the authority of the Scriptures. So far Chrysostom.[1116]

To this it should be added that it has not been said, 'Search Aristotelian philosophy to see whether the resurrection of the dead can be taught with its help,' but, 'Search the Scriptures.' And Paul, in the passage from Timothy, showing how far the scrutiny of arcane Scripture should be taken and to what goal the learning of theology should be directed, says, 'The end of the commandment is charity from a pure heart and a good conscience and from faith unfeigned' [1 Timothy 1:5]. We must therefore philosophize in sacred literature just so far as our diligence leads to these things Paul has mentioned. In truth, those who have not set before themselves this goal, but aim to bring forward a number of paradoxes and novelties in order to be an object of admiration to the populace (which always admires vanities!), these become 'mateologians' instead of theologians.[1117] Paul portrays these in the following words: 'From which things some, going astray, are turned aside to vain babbling, desiring to be teachers of the Law, understanding neither the things they say nor whereof they affirm' [1 Timothy 1:6–7].

Even such things could be borne if this stage play were being acted out within the walls of academic institutions. But now this exhibitionism has invaded the sacred discourses themselves (why should I not say 'sacred'

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1116 Cf Chrysostom *In Timotheum primam homiliae* 1.2 (on 1:4). This sentence and the next reflect the thought of the *1519* text at the equivalent point and incorporate some of its language into this *1520* addition. For the *1519* text see n1089 above.

1117 'Mateologians': *mataeologi*. The word is a transliteration of the Greek *ματαιολόγοι* 'empty talkers' (RSV) in Titus 1:10, compounded from *μάταιος* and *λόγος* 'the study of what is vain, empty, or futile.' For its noun analogue *ματαιολογία* see 1 Tim 1:6 'vain discussion' (RSV), 'vain babbling' (DV). Erasmus used the expression satirically in contrast to 'theologian,' a compound from *θεός* 'God' and *λόγος* 'the study of God.' His use of the term clearly added to the hostility felt against him in Louvain in 1520; cf Epp 1172:15 and 1173:125 (both December 1520), where Erasmus says that the word was directed against the Louvain theologian Nicolaas Baechem; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 158 with n625 and 198 with n768. The language in this sentence reflects three annotations on 1 Tim 1:6 (*aberrantes*, *conversi sunt*, *in vaniloquium*), all from *1516* (though the last was greatly enlarged in *1519*; cf n1087 above), where, as in this paragraph, Erasmus stresses the importance of the *scopus* 'goal' and contrasts *mataeologia* with *theologia*: 'We must be careful that we do not pursue theology in such a way that we fall into mateology, endlessly crossing swords over insignificant trifles' ASD VI-10 12:90–2; cf CWE 44 8 n21. In 1529 Erasmus confessed to Ambrosius Pelargus that his 'temperament recoiled from … mataiologians,' Ep 2170:8–9.

when sermons were once a part of the sacrifice?).[1118] How often have I been ashamed of it! How often have I lamented the lot of the people! I see the plain and artless multitude, open mouthed and eager to hang upon every word of the speaker, to await food for its soul, desiring to learn so that it might return home better, and there some theologast[1119] (whose reverent bearing and appearance[1120] almost make him an object of adoration) is tossing about some intricate and insipid question from Scotus or Ockham, showing how far he has progressed in the Sorbonne and looking for the favour of the people by this display. Meanwhile, a large part of the assembly goes home, clearly, as the Greek proverb has it, 'gaping like a wolf.'[1121] Others repeat to one another how much this young man has read, how talented he is: what would he not be able either to construct or to demolish? No one is delighted except the few who are infected with the same disease – these have something to wrangle over during their supper.

This is the teaching that James calls 'sensual' and 'devilish.' It is different from that which Paul, writing to Timothy, designates as 'sound teaching,'

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1118 In this paragraph *contio* is used to designate both an address and an assembly; cf Hoffmann *Rhetoric and Theology* 40. *Contio sacra* 'sacred discourse' means, quite simply, 'sermon'; cf the colloquy 'The Sermon' CWE 40 940–53 with n5; cf also CWE 67 249 with n2. In early Christianity, sermons were delivered in various settings, but preaching was customary during the liturgy of the word, after which catechumens were dismissed and the Eucharist (ie the 'sacrifice' as Erasmus here calls it) was celebrated by the faithful. The close bond between preaching and the Eucharist was loosened during the Middle Ages as a result of the paraparochial duties granted to the mendicant orders; cf the article 'Predigt' in *Theologische Realenzyclopädie* 27, ed Gerhard Müller (Berlin 1997) especially 245, 250, 266. On preaching and its contexts in the early sixteenth century see the colloquy 'The Whole Duty of Youth' CWE 39 95–6 and 'The Well-to-do Beggars' CWE 39 487–92 with nn46, 48, and 49. See also CWE 67 96–101

1119 'Theologast': *theologaster*, intended derisively. For this and other terms applied derisively to theologians see Louis Dulieu 'Les "Théologastres" de l'université de Paris au temps d'Érasme et de Rabelais 1496–1536' *Bibliothèque d'humanisme et Renaissance* 37 (1965) 248.

1120 'Reverent bearing and appearance': *ἱεροπρεπεῖ σχήματι*. The language appears to echo with mockery the Greek of Titus 2:3, where the writer admonishes older women to be 'reverent in behaviour' (NRSV); cf the annotation on the verse (*in habitu sancto*): '*ἐν καταστήματι ἱεροπρεπεῖς*, the intent of [this Greek expression] is this: with the dress and gait and bodily movements that become holy women, dedicated to God.'

1121 Cf *Adagia* II iii 58. The proverb 'was said of anyone who hoped for something and made great efforts to get it, but was sent away frustrated.'

to be handed down in sincere rather than sophistical discourse, effectual at one and the same time both for urging on the laggards and for comforting the downcast, and for confuting adversaries.[1122] Then, soon, he portrays the mateologians in these words, 'For there are many also not subject, who talk nonsense and deceive minds, on whom silence must be imposed. They overturn entire houses, teaching what they ought not for the sake of base gain.'[1123] If only we had such preachers as the former type – for then these admonitions of mine might seem to have been to no purpose. But whenever we hear those of the latter kind commending papal indulgences in such a way that the whole speech smells of nothing but filthy profit, betrays nothing but an agent contracted for a fee; whenever in undisguised adulation[1124] they attribute more power to the Roman pontiff than he himself either acknowledges or demands; whenever they boast of their own benefactions to which the people owes its welfare; whenever[1125] they each extol with extravagant praises their own saint, all the while vaunting boastfully their own order; whenever they try to persuade that the evil spirit has no power over those who are buried in the habit of this or that saint, that the home that has the cloak of such a saint will be blessed, that the person who wears the garb sacred to the saint will recover from disease, that one who looks daily upon

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1122 Cf James 3:15, where James speaks of *sapientia* 'wisdom' that is devilish; 1 Tim 6:3 and 2 Tim 1:13 ('sound teaching'), where the epistolary author speaks of 'sound words'; the precise expression *doctrina sana* … *fidelis sermo* 'sound teaching … sincere discourse' is found in Titus 1:9. 'Effectual … for urging,' 'comforting,' and 'confuting' may suggest 2 Tim 3:16.

1123 Cf Titus 1:10–11. Erasmus cites the last sentence accurately from the Vulgate; the first sentence is a rough approximation to the Vulgate text. 'Talk nonsense' (*vaniloqui*) as in the Vulgate 'vain talkers' (DV). Cf n1117 above. The introductory expression *ac mox* 'then soon' suggests that Erasmus visualizes the proximity of Titus to Timothy in the biblical text. For Erasmus' attempts to have 'silence imposed' on his critics see 'New Testament Scholarship' 264 with n1098.

1124 in undisguised adulation] Added in *1522*. For the attribution of powers to the pope see *Ratio* 541 with nn265, 266.

1125 whenever ... from disease] In *1523*. In *1520* the passage read: 'Whenever they try to persuade the people that evil spirits have no power over those who are buried in a Franciscan cowl, that the person who for a fixed number of years, in honour of St Dominic, wears the habit of the Preachers will not die from disease.' In *1522* the passage would have achieved its present form, except that the words 'whenever they try to persuade' seem to have been mislocated in the process of printing, so that the text read, 'Whenever they try to persuade, whenever they each extol with extravagant praises their own saints, all the while vaunting boastfully their own order, that the evil spirit has no power ...'

a picture or a statue of Christopher will not perish miserably: whenever one who has been consecrated for the preaching of the gospel babbles from the pulpit these inanities and others more shameful than these, who would not lament? Who would not have compassion on the undiscerning and superstitious multitude?[1126]

With[1127] what weariness for good people are the companions of Dominic or Francis often heard while both groups bear aloft their own saints with much too boastful praises. I myself heard a certain man[1128] who would not hesitate, I know well, to swear that no more distinguished theologian had ever come out of Friesland than himself; who used to proclaim the praises of Catherine of Siena:[1129] that while still a girl she knew from memory all the Rules of the holy Fathers – of Benedict, Francis, Bridget, and the like;[1130] that Jesus himself, taking the girl as his bride, placed the ring on her finger with

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1126 For a vivid and satirical account of saints see the colloquy 'A Pilgrimage for Religion's Sake' CWE 40 624–8; but Erasmus may have in mind here chiefly the founders of the monastic orders, such as St Francis and St Dominic. Erasmus defended his comments on saints in his *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* CWE 84 232–5; on indulgences see *Ratio* 535 with n237. Erasmus elsewhere criticizes the custom of burial in the garb of the orders to avoid the pains of purgatory; cf eg the colloquies 'The Funeral' CWE 40 764–79 with nn58 and 88 and 'The Seraphic Funeral,' a colloquy occasioned by the death and burial of Alberto Pio in Franciscan dress; cf especially the introduction to this colloquy in CWE 40 996–9, also 1015–17 nn17 and 18. Pio's will stipulated that he should be buried in the Franciscan garb, CWE 84 390. Cf also *De praeparatione* CWE 70 420, 435. Erasmus responded briefly to charges brought by the Spanish monks against his comments on both indulgences and saints; cf *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1090B–E.

1127 With ... are intelligent.] This paragraph was added in *1523*.

1128 The man remains unidentified.

1129 Catherine of Siena (1347–80), of the Third Order of the Dominicans, appears repeatedly in Erasmus' writings; cf especially the colloquy 'The Apotheosis of Johann Reuchlin' CWE 39 246–52 with n43. For the story of Catherine with Jesus in the bedroom see Ep 447:299–302 (August 1516).

1130 Erasmus lists these founders of monastic communities chronologically: Benedict of Nursia (c 480–540) founded several monastic communities, most notably one at Monte Cassino; the Rule he established (seventy-three chapters, as we now have it) became the most influential Rule in the Latin church. For the Rule of St Francis of Assisi (1181/1182–1226) see CWE 39 494 n78 and CWE 40 1020 n43. St Bridget of Sweden (c 1303–73) founded the order of Brigittines, with double monasteries for men and women; cf the colloquy 'The Old Men's Chat' CWE 39 457:30–41. On memorizing the Rules of St Benedict and St Francis see *Paraclesis* 418 with n80.

his own hands; that so intimate was the companionship between Jesus and the girl that they frequently walked together in the bedroom from one end to the other, talking with one another about various things, 'just like a girl and a youth,' said he, 'who are desperately in love with one another' – and he added a vulgar expression that signifies extramarital love. That we might stand even more in awe, he added, 'So intimate was their companionship that they frequently said their "hours" together in alternating responses: he would chant first, "Lord, open thou my lips," and she would then respond, "And my mouth shall show forth thy praise."'[1131] When he was preaching these and many other things of the same sort, he saw, I suppose, someone laughing, and he swelled up with anger in his whole being. He said, 'Someone might say that these are idle tales, but the same person will also be able to call the story of Lazarus' resurrection and the other stories reported in the Gospels "idle tales."' What could one have heard more impious than this utterance? Last of all, as though the talk here had not been sufficiently absurd, he promised that he would tell some similar tales about his Catherine every day throughout the entire octave.[1132] I report this not to besmirch anyone, for I designate no one, but to advise theologians not to speak with absurdity like this in front of the people, some of whom are intelligent.

But[1133] to return to contentious questions. See how anxiously Paul warns his own Timothy against them. He says, 'Do not contend with words, for it leads to nothing except to the subversion of the hearers' [2 Timothy 2:14]. Then, soon, when he had bidden him divide rightly the word of truth, he added, 'But avoid the language of empty novelties.'[1134] Again, to Titus, when he had reminded him of many things that contribute to godly ways,

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1131 The lines are taken from Ps 51:15. The 'hours' are the eight liturgical hours of prayer: matins, lauds, prime, terce, sext, none, vespers, and compline.

1132 The octave, technically the eighth day after a feast, came to include the celebration from the first day to the eighth day. During the Middle Ages, feasts with octaves honoured many saints.

1133 But ... In any case] This paragraph and the first few sentences of the next were added in *1520*.

1134 Cf 2 Tim 2:15–16. The citation combines two different translations given in the Vulgate for the Greek *κενοφωνία* (found here in 2 Tim 2:16 and in 1 Tim 6:20): *novitates* 'novelties' (1 Tim 6:20) and *vaniloquia* 'vain babblings' (2 Tim 2:16 DV). See the annotation on 2 Tim 2:16 (*et vaniloquia*), where Erasmus suggests that the translation *novitates* in 1 Tim 6:20 resulted from reading *καινοφωνία* for *κενοφωνία* in 1 Tim 6:20. The paraphrases on these verses reflect the Vulgate translation: on 1 Tim 6:20 ('sophistic debates and novel dogmas') see CWE 44 38 and on 2 Tim 2:16 ('meaningless verbal disputations') CWE 44 46.

he urges him – pressingly – to reject foolish questions and genealogies and contentions that come from the Law.[1135] Writing to Timothy, he calls these controversies *λογομαχίαι* ['word battles'], for which he says certain men have a morbid craving, though from these nothing comes but envy, strife, wrangling, evil suspicions, conflicts among persons corrupted in mind, destitute of truth, who prefer their own gain to godliness.[1136]

No one should, however, take these remarks of mine to imply that I utterly condemn those who have left us nothing but questions, or that I reject scholastic disputes. From these truth is quite often elicited, just as fire flashes forth from striking flint stones together. But I am asking for moderation in these, and discrimination. Moderation will guard us from searching into everything, discrimination from searching just anything at all. In any case, there are[1137] many things even in the books of the neoterics worth learning, but they should be treated in a manner suitable to one's age, tasted moderately, handled soberly and chastely. For studies of this kind were completely unknown among theologians long ago; then, after they had crept in (as usually happens in human affairs), they grew gradually to a vast extent, a point from which they have now begun in some universities to be regarded more cautiously and with more moderation, as in Cambridge in England and Louvain in Brabant.[1138] These studies do not, on this account, flourish less, but they flourish more truly.

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1135 Cf Titus 3:9. The final clause, 'that come from the Law,' reflects Erasmus' annotation on the verse (*pugnas legis*).

1136 Cf 1 Tim 6:4–5. Erasmus may be citing from memory, but the language follows closely that of his own translation and that of the Vulgate.

1137 there are] The *1519* text resumes here; cf n1089 above.

1138 Through the influence of John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, Erasmus had in 1511 taken up a lectureship in Greek created for him at Cambridge. Thereafter throughout his life he would repeatedly recreate the image of Cambridge as a flourishing centre for the humanities. In December 1517 he wrote that Cambridge had become a 'changed place' (Ep 730:19–21); in August of the previous year he had noted that there the knowledge of Greek and of good literature was thriving (cf Ep 456:255–63, August 1516); later in life he gave credit to John Fisher ('under the auspices of William Warham') for establishing the humanities at three colleges: St John's, Christ's, and Queen's, where studies prepared men not for sophistical wrestling (*λογομαχίαι*) but for preaching the 'word of God in an earnest and evangelical spirit'; cf Ep 2157:619–32 (preface to the Froben edition of Augustine) and Allen Ep 3036:63–71 (preface to *Ecclesiastes* CWE 67 243–4). Fisher, chancellor of the university from 1504, had been chiefly responsible for the refoundation of Christ's College and had refounded St John's College, 'the first foundation of its kind in England to make

But what sort of spectacle is it for an eighty-year-old theologian to have a taste for nothing but sophisms only and[1139] to the very end of his life, for nothing but clever prattling? I once saw a good many of this sort at Paris: if it had been necessary to produce a passage from Paul, they would think they had been quite transported to another world.[1140] Accordingly, *if anyone has* been endowed with *such great power of intellect that he is able to embrace both kinds of studies* **[122]**, then, at least as far as I am concerned, *let him go! Let him go where his abilities beckon – and good luck go with him* **[123]**. *But it is, nevertheless, from* the studies advocated here *that one should begin*; in *these, I think, the greater* and the *better part of life should be spent*. *But if* one of the two kinds *must be abandoned, I can only confess the absolute truth, that this is the side I should prefer to favour. It is better to be a little less the sophist than to have little understanding of the Gospels and the letters of* the apostles. *It is preferable to be ignorant of certain doctrines of Aristotle than not to know the precepts of Christ. Finally, I should prefer to be a godly theologian with* Chrysostom *than to be undefeated with Scotus*.

*This, at least, cannot be denied, that the teaching of Christ has been defended and illuminated by those ancient theologians, whom I should allow to be set aside only if it were clear that, by the cunning ever so cunning and the subtleties ever so subtle in which these scholastics engage, either a single pagan has been converted to faith in Christ or a single heretic has been refuted and changed. For if we are willing to admit the truth, the fact that fewer heresies today exist,* or at least are obvious, *we owe to the stake* more truly *than to syllogisms. Is there any kind of knot that can be tied with dialectical subtlety that the same subtlety may not untie if both sides are*

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serious provision for the new humanistic studies' (Ep 432:3n). (He was thus the founder of two colleges, not three, though he had also served as president of Queen's; cf CEBR II 36). See further D.F.S.Thomson and H.C. Porter *Erasmus and Cambridge* (Toronto 1963). For the foundation and development of the trilingual college at Louvain see *Ratio* 496–7 with n40, and 'New Testament Scholarship' 97 with n391 and 153–6. In February 1518, Erasmus wrote that Louvain was 'the place to which everyone should hurry who wants to get the three tongues,' Ep 777:31–4.

1139 and ... prattling.] Added in *1520*

1140 Erasmus went to Paris in the autumn of 1495 and entered the Collège de Montague. His experience there is described, no doubt with some exaggeration, in the colloquy 'A Fish Diet' CWE 40 715–17. In Ep 64 he describes his dislike of the lectures he attended; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 10 with n46. While the theology curriculum at Paris required the very considerable study of Scripture, Erasmus resisted the scholastic approach to the discipline; cf R.J. Schoeck *Erasmus Grandescens: The Growth of a Humanist's Mind and Spirituality* Bibliotheca Humanistica & Reformatorica 43 (Nieuwkoop 1988) 103–5.

*free to make whatever assumptions they wish?* What have you gained if you tie a knot that cannot be undone, to which, however, sometimes not even the one who ties it gives his consent. *But those simple writings, effective through its truth, not its subtlety, were able in the course of a few small years to make new the peoples of the whole world* **[125]**.

*But let us dismiss the comparison of studies. In these, to each let his own study be honourable, and, to use the words of St Paul, let everyone* be at peace in *his own mind* [Romans 14:5].[1141] *Let anyone who likes scholastic debates follow*, by his own choice, *what is taught in the schools*,[1142] provided[1143] he does not rate too highly the dogmas of the school, provided he does not continue in this too long. For I have seen many men, already grey, who tried to be reconciled to that ancient theology, but the attempt did not turn out very well because it was made too late.

*But if anyone prefers to be trained for godliness rather than for disputation, he should occupy himself* at once *and above all with the sources, should occupy himself with those writers who have drunk most nearly from the sources*. If any uncertainty arises with regard to matters that pertain to godliness, a sound and prudent man will not lack a wholesome response from the divine oracles. Paul has trustworthy advice even when he does not have a command from the Lord.[1144] *A holy prayer*[1145] *to God will compensate for what has been lost in syllogisms*. Ultimately, *you will be a theologian sufficiently unconquered* if *you succumb to no vice, yield to no desires, even if you leave a* contentious disputation *the loser*. *Whoever teaches Christ purely is an exceedingly great teache*r. If they consider it base not to know the definitions of Scotus, it is more base not to know the ordinances of Christ. If it is not very theological to fail to grasp the writings of Durandus, it is even less theological to fail to grasp the

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1141 'Be at peace in': *acquiescat*. In the *Methodus* Erasmus had adopted the Vulgate *abundet* 'abound' (DV), translated in the *Methodus* 'be convinced'; cf *Methodus* 453 with n126. Here he adopts not his own translation, *satisfaciat* 'be satisfied,' but the interpretation given in his annotation on the verse 'be at peace with his own point of view,' meaning, 'be fully persuaded'; cf the annotation on Rom 14:5 ('in his understanding').

1142 schools] There followed here in *1519* and *1520* a clause, 'provided he does not do only this.'

1143 provided ... school] Added in *1520*. The translation takes *dogmatis* as a shortened form of *dogmatibus*.

1144 Cf 1 Cor 7:25.

1145 'Prayer': *deprecatio*; in the *Methodus* at this point, *oratio*; cf *Modus orandi Deum* CWE 70 154–6.

writings of Paul. A theologian gets his name from the divine oracles, not from human opinions.[1146]

A good part of theology is inspiration, which comes only to a character that has been completely cleansed. And[1147] yet there are no people who claim this power with greater arrogance than those whose lives are wholly enslaved to ambition, frequently also to lust and gluttony, lives corrupted[1148] on all sides by dissimulation, pretence, and hypocrisy. They boast that they are heralds of the evangelical doctrine, they make themselves the pillars of the Christian religion, on whose word the undiscerning multitude hangs. Christ doubtless perceived their deeds when he lamented the lot of the people who were wandering like sheep scattered and without a shepherd.[1149] For our times also have their pharisees and their rabbis, our times have their hypocrites; they have their phylacteries with which they commend themselves to the simple-minded rabble – and[1150] would that they did not deceive the leaders also. We must therefore pray to Christ either to change this pharisaical breed for the better or to drive them away from his flock. And I have said this not to hurt good men but to remind the evil of their duty.

The End of the *System of True Theology*
by Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam.

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1146 'Theologian': *theologus*; Erasmus plays on the derivation from the Greek *theos* and *logos* 'word of God.' Cf *Ratio* n1117. For Durandus see ibidem 515 with nn118, 119.

1147 And ... duty.] The remainder of the work was added in *1520*, with an exception as noted below.

1148 corrupted] *corrupta* first in *1523*; in *1520*, *correptae* and in *1522*, *correpta*, in either form probably by mistake, but if intended, perhaps with the meaning 'swept away by,' 'seized by'

1149 Cf Matt 9:36.

1150 and ... also.] Added in *1523*

# Separate Latin Editions 1519–23

A separate edition of Erasmus' translation of the New Testament was first issued, over the author's strenuous objections, by Dirk Martens at Louvain in the autumn of 1519.[1] The work seems to have met a need, for similar ventures followed in the next two years at Leipzig, Basel, Strasbourg, and Hagenau. After 1521 unauthorized reprints of the Latin version became, in Allen's phrase,[2] 'very numerous.' Despite his opposition, Erasmus contributed three new prefaces to these reprints. The first was composed for the Martens edition of 1519. Here Erasmus' principal aim was to explain his opposition to a separate printing of the translation and to warn the reader not to pass judgment on it without first consulting the annotations. The Latin text used by Martens was that of the large Froben edition of the *Novum Testamentum* of 1519.

We first encounter the second of these new prefaces in the Cratander edition published at Basel in August 1520, and it is possible that Erasmus composed it for that work, although, as Allen points out,[3] this would be the only example of a piece by Erasmus published for the first time by Cratander. It is preceded in the volume by the letter from Pope Leo X and followed by the dedicatory preface to Leo that is included in all five of the complete editions of the *Novum Testamentum*. It is described on the title page as a *nova praefatio Erasmi* 'a new preface by Erasmus,' although in fact it has more the character of a *Paraclesis* than a preface. It reads like a sermon on the text from Matthew's Gospel, 'Come to me all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you

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1 The preface is dated 1 September 1519. For an additional brief account of the separate Latin editions in the context of Erasmus' work see 'New Testament Scholarship' 183–5.
2 Allen Ep 1010 introduction
3 Allen Ep 1010 introduction

rest' [11:28]. Beginning with the universality of the gospel message, Erasmus builds his argument for the universal relevance of Scripture. He ends with the familiar warning to the reader not to criticize his translation without first consulting the annotations.

The third of these prefaces is the shortest. It was written for the Froben edition of the separate translation of July 1522. The text used is that of the third edition of the *Novum Testamentum*, which had been published at Basel in February of that year. Erasmus begins with the usual assurance that his work is not intended as an attack on the Vulgate. But what is most striking in this brief piece is the categorical formulation of Erasmus' textual methodology. As he defines it, his first recourse is to the Greek manuscripts; if they disagree, then the testimony of the Fathers is considered; if there are still readings of equal weight, then the Latin text is given preference. Such a procedure assigns to the Latin manuscripts a fairly humble role and suggests a somewhat more mechanical process than Erasmus' actual practice. Moreover, it contrasts with the statement in the prefatory letter to the reader in the *Annotations* of 1516, where the order of preference is first, the Greek text, second, the Latin manuscripts, and finally, citations in the Fathers.[4] Erasmus' protestations that it was not his intention to 'tear apart the Vulgate'[5] was never entirely convincing. His avowed purpose was to correct its many errors, to establish the text primarily on the more reliable basis of the Greek originals, and to provide a more readable and elegant version. Erasmus could claim that the Vulgate was not being 'torn apart' only in the sense that it would remain the official version to be read in universities and churches.[6]

This Froben edition of the translation of July 1522 also contains a short essay known as *De philosophia evangelica*. According to Allen, this is printed at the back of the book *in rem typographi* 'to fill the last eight pages.' If this is correct, then there must have been more than one edition in the same month, for in a copy in the Gemeente Bibliotheek, Rotterdam (Erasmus Collection 11 f 18) the *De philosophia evangelica* appears at the beginning of the book along with other preliminary pieces and is described in the *elenchus* on the reverse of the title page as a *Praefatio nova de philosophia evangelica*. In a further printing of January 1523, however, the *De philosophia evangelica* is again relegated to the end of the book.

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4 Cf the prefatory letter to the *Annotations* in the edition of 1516, Ep 373:14–25, 36–43 ('Prefaces and Letters' 783–4).
5 Cf *Apologia* 460.
6 Cf *Apologia* 466 with n58.

Erasmus always regarded the *Annotations* as an integral part of his New Testament and was at first reluctant to agree to printing the translation separately. In his *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* he maintains that he had tried to prevent publication and that the preface that he wrote for the Martens edition was intended as a warning to the reader.[7] In the 1515 'Preface to the *Annotations*' Erasmus urges the reader to observe that his annotations are not a commentary.[8] Presumably he planned his annotations not so much as a theological exegesis as a philological defence of his Latin version. To publish a translation without its accompanying defence was to send it into the world 'naked and defenceless.' But if we may judge by the milder tone of the prefaces of *1522*, his opposition became somewhat muted as he bowed to the inevitable.

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7 Cf *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 35, 40.

8 Cf Ep 373:5–9 ('Prefaces and Letters' 782). Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 50 with n213.

# PREFACES TO ERASMUS' LATIN VERSION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT ISSUED SEPARATELY WITHOUT THE ANNOTATIONS

translated and annotated by
ALEXANDER DALZELL

# PREFACE TO ERASMUS' LATIN TRANSLATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT PUBLISHED BY DIRK MARTENS AT LOUVAIN IN 1519

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO ALL FAIR-MINDED READERS, GREETING[1]

In the face of all my protests, gentle reader, it has been decided to print the New Testament in my version without the annotations, in other words, to cast it naked and defenceless to the tender mercies of its detractors.[2] Other men's wisdom, or their love of money, having won the day, the next best thing, indeed all that remains, is to issue a formal warning. If you feel that anything is in disagreement with the common and accepted version, you must be in no hurry to interpret this as though my new version offered any criticism or correction of the old. I have taken what I found in correct copies of the Greek text, and have translated it in such a way that sometimes I give our own text[3] the preference over the Greek, and from time to time put the two together[4] so as to leave it to the reader to decide which is the better reading. At least I have shown, what in fact cannot be denied, that in our texts there are many corrupt passages, a certain number of passages translated in such a way as to be obscure or ambiguous or barbarous, and some which have hitherto been imperfectly understood.[5]

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1 This letter is published in CWE as Ep 1010. The translation is that of Sir Roger Mynors.

2 Literally, 'to the teeth of Zoilus and his like.' Zoilus was a Cynic philosopher of the fourth century BC who became notorious for the bitterness of his criticisms of Homer, which gained him the nickname *Homeromastix* 'the scourge of Homer.' Erasmus likes to refer to his own critics as 'scourges of Erasmus' (*Erasmomastiges* or *Erasmiomastiges*). Cf *Adagia* II v 8.

3 Ie the text of the Vulgate

4 Although this is a preface to a publication of Erasmus' translation alone, the reference here can only be to the *Annotations*. It was in these notes that different readings were discussed and evaluated. But Erasmus thought of text and notes as fundamentally inseparable.

5 The expressions reflect specific indexes in the recently published New Testament; cf in 'Errors in the Vulgate' lists of passages 'corrupt' (905–15), 'obscure' (including 'misunderstood'; 888–900), 'barbarous' (875–83).

In these places, if you feel that your studies have been assisted by my efforts, be grateful not to me but to Jesus Christ, under whose guidance we do all that is done aright. If on the other hand you find something which at first sight you do not like, be in no hurry to speak ill of me. Suspend judgment until you have consulted my annotations. Heaven forbid that you should wish to emulate the unheard-of impudence of some men who privately and in public condemn what they confess they have not read, in which they show themselves more severe than Zoilus himself:[6] he did read the Homeric poems diligently before criticizing some points in them, perhaps with good reason, and meanwhile clearly approved what he left untouched. These men shut their eyes and, like blind gladiators,[7] attack something they cannot see and condemn what they cannot understand and do not wish to understand. Such is their astonishing blend of ignorance and conceit that they take something which the supreme pontiff[8] after due inspection and examination has declared to deserve the attention of all who wish to learn, and this, without looking into it, they pursue with clamorous malevolence, especially among those who know no better. How came such unfairness, I might almost say, such perversity, among Christians – worse still, among men who wish to achieve distinction by their profession of the religious life?

But a dispute with such people is not to my purpose. It is to you, dear reader, that I appeal, who bring to Christ's teaching a truly Christian spirit. If anything here is to your taste, enjoy it; and then be all the more fair-minded, if the man who has tried to be of service to you should fail of success in his pious undertaking.

1 September 1519

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6 Erasmus frequently complained that many of his detractors had never read his work; cf eg *Apologia* 457 with n7 and Ep 948:214–17.

7 'Blind gladiators': *andabatae*, the name (of uncertain origin) given to gladiators who fought blindfolded. The term seems to be used, in extant Latin texts, only in a metaphorical sense. Cf *Adagia* II iv 33.

8 The reference is to the letter from Leo X (10 September 1518), Ep 864, commending Erasmus' edition of the New Testament; it was printed in the Martens edition and is included in 'Prefaces and Letters' 772–3 below.

# PREFACE TO ERASMUS' TRANSLATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT PUBLISHED BY CRATANDER AT BASEL IN AUGUST 1520

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE PIOUS READER, GREETING

Everyone in my opinion should take as a personal message to himself what our Lord and Master Jesus Christ says in Matthew's Gospel: 'Come to me all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.'[1] The Saviour of all turns away no class of men: he invites all to be refreshed, for there is no one in this world who is not beset by some affliction. He makes no distinction between man and woman, young and old, slave and free, king and private person, rich and poor, Jew and gentile, priest and layman, monk and non-monk.[2] 'Whoever you are, whatever your station, if you seek to be refreshed, come to me.' Ambition is a weighty burden, the tyranny of desire is a heavy yoke to bear. One man is tormented by envy, another is racked by anger and the lust for revenge. Love makes one man miserable, hatred makes another more miserable still. Here is a man plagued by dire poverty, there is someone depressed by illness and old age. Tyranny holds one man in its grip, human laws weigh heavily on another. Is there any misery from which our life is free? But Christ, our excellent Lord, says to all, 'Come to me.'

In earlier times men had recourse to philosophers, to Moses, to the Pharisees, to the rabbis, to one place and another. Now 'Come unto me, and I will do what they did not do – I will refresh you.' All men seek rest and quiet. Who would not snatch at such a blessed gift so freely offered by our most merciful Lord who of his own accord calls the whole world to himself? Who would not immediately feel a profound certitude in his mind when he reflected that the one who made this promise can do all things?[3] 'Whatever

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1 Matt 11:28: 'I will refresh you' (DV); 'I will give you rest' (AV). Erasmus follows the Vulgate here and reads *reficiam* 'I shall refresh you'; cf his annotation on Matt 11:28, where he argues that *reficiam* and the Greek verb that lies behind it are used in a medical sense 'to restore,' 'revive' (the weary). In *1516* all annotations on 11:26–30 were included in a single paragraph introduced by the cue phrase *et ante te*. Although the others were distinguished in *1522*, the note on *reficiam* remained attached to that on 11:26; it is, however, given its own paragraph in ASD VI-5 204.

2 Cf Gal 3:28.

3 Matt 19:26

sorrow you bear, however heavy your burden, I will refresh you.' He makes us a magnificent promise, saying not a word about the price – all he says is 'Come.' Why hesitate to come to him? He came to us for our sake.

Someone will say: 'How shall we go to him?' We are creatures who crawl upon the earth: he sits on high in heaven; so we must find our way there if we wish to go to Christ. We cannot go on foot – we can go only with our hearts, or rather we must walk not on our physical feet but on the feet of our hearts. If the things of this world that hold us back from the blessings of heaven are beginning to lose their lustre, you are already starting on the path to Christ. There is no need to cross the seas or travel to unknown regions. The word of God is here before you, on your lips and in your heart.[4] Take no notice of anyone who says, 'Look, Christ is here in the country' or 'He is here in the city,' for the kingdom of God is within you.[5] If you wish to go to Christ, go to your own self. There is nothing deeper within you than your soul. It is there you must go with your whole being. When you are attracted by things of the body, you withdraw from yourself, and the further you withdraw, the further you are from Christ. The more you fall under the spell of riches and those 'goods' that even the pagan philosophers call 'external,'[6] the further you withdraw from yourself. It is not possible, however, to come to Christ unless the Father draws you to him, or rather unless Christ calls you. Let us cry out with the bride, 'Draw me after you';[7] let us cry out with Peter, 'Bid me come to you.'[8] Long ago the Pharisees and the Herodians came to Christ,[9] but they departed in a worse state than when they came. No one really approaches Christ unless he does so with a sincere faith, unless he 'hungers and thirsts after righteousness.'[10]

As long as we approach him in the proper manner, there is no danger of our approaching in vain. He is present to his own, he is more truly present than he was long ago when he was physically present to the Jews. In the

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4 Cf Rom 10:8 with its reference to Deut 30:11–14.
5 Cf Luke 17:21, a controversial logion that Erasmus interprets similarly in his paraphrase on the verse; cf CWE 48 112 with n22; also Matt 24:23.
6 Greek philosophers, particularly Aristotle and the Stoics, distinguished 'external goods' (such as riches, honour, health, good looks) from the 'highest good.' Cicero discusses the different views of the Peripatetics and Stoics on the importance of 'external goods' in *De finibus* 3.41–50.
7 Song of Sol 1:4
8 Matt 14:28
9 Cf Matt 22:16; Mark 12:13; cf also Mark 3:6.
10 Matt 5:6

Gospels and apostolic letters he left us the crystal-clear springs of his own mind. You can go to these as often as you please. You can even carry them around with you. We have access to the fountains given us by the Saviour, and what we draw from them is nothing less than our salvation. Why, then, do we neglect them and prefer to drink from the trampled pools of others that are choked with rubble and contain more mud than water – and I say nothing for the moment about those springs of water that some have defiled with poison.[11]

There is no reason why we should sit on the fence, saying, 'It is the business of the theologians to dip into these fountains and to serve to others what they have drawn from them; our duty is to accept eagerly what is offered whenever we have the good fortune to find a theologian to whom that verse of Solomon's truly applies, "The mouth of a righteous man is a fountain of life."'[12] But since there is a remarkable paucity of such people and most of them seek what is in their own interests, not in Christ's, the safest course is to go to the actual wellsprings on one's own. They are close at hand and plain to see. They call for no riddling sophist or relentless logician or wily philosopher. What they need is a mind elevated in Christ and humble in itself,[13] that is, a mind that claims nothing for itself and expects everything from Christ. It will be enough if it has learned these simple truths that the teachings of Christ alone are a sufficient rule for piety and that the life of Christ, and of Christ alone, is the only model we need of a righteous life. Whatever blessings God in his goodness has lavished upon us have come to us freely through Christ; so we may claim no praise or glory for ourselves. God exalted him through various afflictions and raised him through the cross to the glory of immortality so that we too may experience here and now a kind of immortality[14] through the innocence of our lives; through acts of charity, doing what good we can to all men, even to the godless; through endurance, cheerfully tolerating, in hopes of a future reward, whatever is inflicted upon us for the sake of Christ; always controlling our actions so that even the wicked are attracted to the way of the gospel, allowing no one a plausible reason to malign us, but imputing all that we do or say or suffer to the glory

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11 For the contrasting images of pure spring and muddy pool, found very frequently in Erasmus' hermeneutical comments see *Methodus* 429 with n23.

12 Prov 10:11

13 Cf the final sentence in the annotation on Rom 15:19 ('of wonders in the strength of the Holy Spirit').

14 For the sentiment see the paraphrase on Rom 6:5 CWE 42 37 and the paraphrase on 1 John 3:3 CWE 44 188; in both passages we are said to acquire the immortality of Christ by 'practising' the pattern and virtues of his life.

of Christ. Over such a life ambition will have no control, nor will anger nor envy nor greed nor any of those other evils that plague the life of man. Death will hold no terrors for one who is persuaded that for the godly nothing perishes; indeed it is through the actual loss of life that we gain immortality.

Such is the philosophy that we can draw from these springs. From it we take the name of Christians. If there is no one who does not delight in being called a Christian, then no one should be ignorant of the teachings of his Founder. No one dares to call himself an Augustinian who has not read the Augustinian Rule. No one would claim to be a Benedictine if he were ignorant of the Rule of Benedict. No one would call himself a Franciscan if he has not seen the Rule of Francis. Do you, then, consider yourself a Christian when you have never troubled to get to know the rule of Christ? Francis states, 'Anyone who does not wear such and such a colour and is not girded with a rope is not my disciple,'[15] and they all strictly observe this injunction, which is the work of a human being. Christ proclaims, 'He who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.'[16] Men have no scruple about disobeying this command, yet no one considers himself any less a Christian. If a Franciscan wore black or went about without a cincture, he would be gripped with terror lest some devil should suddenly carry him off to hell[17] for daring to do something that is not in itself either good or bad but is an offence only because a human being forbade it. Christ, who is much greater than Francis (if indeed any comparison can be made), commanded you not to fight back against a wicked man[18] but to repay evil with good and respond to insults with kind words;[19] yet you do not tremble or shiver or fear the earth will open up before you when you reward good with evil and lash out at a benefactor with false and virulent

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15 These can hardly be the precise words of Francis. In Erasmus' time, the Franciscan habit was grey, but in the Regula Bullata of Pope Honorius III of 1223 the only requirement stated is that the habit be of 'cheap cloth' and that the friars learn to mend it with sackcloth or other patches. In the dream that Erasmus had of Francis, which he relates in Allen Ep 2700: 37–53, the saint is dressed in 'dusky undyed wool ... just as it was when clipped from the sheep.' A similar comparison between the Christian and the monks in their orders is made in *Paraclesis*; cf 418 with n80.

16 Matt 10:38

17 This remark was criticized by Nicolaas Baechem, whose views were reflected in a document that circulated anonymously; cf Ep 1469:195–7. For the context see 'New Testament Scholarship' 265 with n1104, and note the reference there to the *Paraclesis*.

18 Cf Matt 5:39.

19 Cf Matt 5:44; 1 Thess 5:15; 1 Pet 3:9–17.

tongue? This rule applies equally to all Christians. By it everyone, whatever his status, will be tried in the judgment hall of God; in that court it will be a question not of fish or meat or the colour of one's vestments, but of things that truly matter. If a Minorite[20] wears a colour that shades a little towards black, you denounce him as an apostate, yet you do not consider yourself an apostate although you have forgotten the whole teaching of the gospel and all your baptismal vows, and have become a total slave to Mammon, to the pleasures of this world, and to ambition; and you, who dedicated yourself once and for all to Christ and swore allegiance to him, live at the pleasure of the Adversary, whom you abjured and execrated for all time.[21]

If we have such scrupulous regard for man-made rules, whence this supine neglect of the one thing that ought to be scrupulously observed? This is not a new complaint. Long ago God made the same complaint through the prophet Jeremiah that, while the children of Jonadab always obeyed their father's command, abstaining from wine whose use he had forbidden to his family, at the same time the people of Israel were disregarding the commandments of God.[22] Christ made this self-same complaint in the Gospel, crying out against those who transgressed the laws of God on account of regulations imposed by men.[23] Peter and Paul, the first among the apostles, lament this neglect in many passages.[24] Now things have reached the point where it is not even permissible to complain. The world is full of preachers, and yet a great part of them preach about human concerns, not divine, for their aim is not the glory of Christ but material gain, a life of pleasure, some rich bishopric or comfortable abbacy. Now they do these things openly and evangelically. They dance attendance on the great but neglect the poor and

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20 'Minorite': Ie a Franciscan friar or Friar Minor. For Mammon see Matt 6:24 and Luke 16:13; NRSV translates the word in both passages by 'wealth' with a footnote.

21 The reference here is to the vow taken at baptism 'to renounce the devil and all his works.' For Erasmus 'the most sacred vow ... is the vow we take to Christ in baptism,' Ep 1196:352–5.

22 The 'children of Jonadab,' also known as Rechabites after Rechab, father of Jonadab, were a conservative sect of the Kenites, a nomadic people who at various times came into contact with the people of Israel (cf 2 Kings 10:15–17) but were not themselves considered Israelites. Jeremiah contrasts the Rechabites' fidelity to their ancestral practices with the apostasy of the men of Judah; Jeremiah 35.

23 Cf eg Matt 15:1–6; Mark 7:5–13; Matt 23:1–12.

24 This would seem to be an inference rather than an allusion to passages that explicitly 'lament' the neglect of divine laws because of human regulations. Peter's words in Acts 15:10 may fit here, likewise Paul's expositions of human helplessness before the demands of the Law, eg Romans 2 and 7.

humble; they despise the latter, while for the former they provide a trickle of bland platitudes instead of the message of salvation. It is not much safer today than it was in the time of Nero to offer the pure waters of Christ to a people who are thirsty and have long grown sick of the fantasies of men. The fault lies with those pseudoapostles who are slaves to their bellies, not servants of Jesus Christ.[25]

But I prefer to drop these protests, however justified they may be, and urge Christians to bring a pure mind to the pellucid fountains of Christ and to thirst only for that teaching that makes us worthy of our master Christ. He will not fail us if we try. Once we have tasted the waters of this stream, once we have appreciated how sweet our Lord is, the teaching of the sophists will begin to revolt us, and we shall never be able to tear ourselves away from him but shall say with the disciples, 'Lord, to whom shall we go; you have the words of life.'[26] I have attempted, by repairing the channels and cleaning the reservoir, to let the stream flow more clearly and to render it more fit for drinking, for what was produced for all alike ought to be accessible to all.

I do not know whether I should repeat the warning I made before since I realize that I am repeatedly singing to the deaf,[27] who, like asps, deliberately block their ears, not wanting to hear the voice of the charmer calling them to better things.[28] I have translated into Latin what I found in the corrected Greek texts, adopting as far as possible a simple and elegant Latin style. So if anything is at odds with the traditional version, critics should not immediately conclude that I have insolently dismissed it, but should first consult my *Annotations* and then accept what seems best. Show at least this much restraint, not to condemn unseen what has already been approved more than once[29] by the supreme pastor of the church, Leo X. Farewell.

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25 Cf 2 Cor 11:13; Phil 3:18–19 and 1:1.

26 John 6:68

27 *Adagia* I iv 87

28 'Asps': Cf Ps 58:4–5: 'like the deaf adder [*aspis* VG according to LXX] that stops its ears so that it does not hear the voice of charmers or of the cunning enchanter.' This supposed characteristic of the asp is described in more detail in Isidore *Etymologiae* 12.12.

29 'More than once' seems to be something of an exaggeration, since Leo's formal letter of approval appeared for the first time in 1519. And despite several appeals from Erasmus for a further statement of support, there is no evidence that the pope responded, though Erasmus could legitimately claim that Leo had earlier encouraged and lauded his work, having expressed approval for eg the *Moria* (cf Epp 673:7–9, 739:14–15), for the *Novum Testamentum* (cf Ep 843:369–71, 510–16, and Ep 835 introduction), and more generally for Erasmus' endeavours

# PREFACE TO ERASMUS' LATIN TRANSLATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT PUBLISHED BY FROBEN AT BASEL IN JULY 1522

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE PIOUS READER, GREETING

Because of slanders put about by certain people, I must say again, gentle reader, what I have often said in the past, that in preparing this present translation I am not condemning the common version that is now used in the Roman church but attempting to make it more accurate and easier to understand, and that I have faithfully rendered what I found in the Greek manuscripts. Wherever these differ, I have followed the old interpretation given by the orthodox Fathers. Where alternative readings are of equal weight, I have favoured that which agrees with the Latin manuscripts. This seems all I need say by way of explanation for the present. Anyone who wants more should consult the *Apologia* that I prefixed to the full work, and not be tempted into calumny. So let us read the gospel with a burning zeal – and not just read it but live it. It was called by the prophet the 'gospel of peace';[1] we must take care not to let it become the gospel of discord. This is not a different gospel; it is not new. It is one and the same gospel, and since it was given to all people, it is right for all of us to come together in it. So let us urge one another to do this so that we may truly be the children of our Father who is in heaven and be acknowledged as his true disciples by our Lord Jesus, who is blessed for evermore. Amen.

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(cf Ep 389:12–17). In May 1515 Erasmus wrote to Leo to ask permission to dedicate to him his edition of Jerome. Leo accepted the dedication in a letter dated 10 July. But Erasmus later decided to dedicate the Jerome to Archbishop Warham and the New Testament to Leo (cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 31–2). He was inclined, however, to regard the pope's positive response to the edition of Jerome as also embracing the New Testament, and when he included Leo's letter in his *Epistolae aliquot illustrium virorum ad Erasmum* (Louvain: Dirk Martens 1516), he quietly altered Leo's 'We shall look forward ... to the volumes of St Jerome edited by you' to '... the volumes of St Jerome and of the New Testament ...'! Cf Ep 338:26–8 with 27n. For this edition of Erasmus' letters, the second to be published, see CWE 3 348 and Ep 338 introduction.

1 'Gospel of peace': Cf Nah 1:15 and Isa 52:7, reflected in, respectively, Eph 6:15 and Rom 10:15 DV, AV, VG, and ER (but not in RSV and NRSV).

# ON GOSPEL PHILOSOPHY

*De philosophia evangelica*

introduced, translated, and annotated by
ANN DALZELL

The little work that we know as the *De philosophia evangelica* 'On Gospel Philosophy' was composed by Erasmus for the separate Latin edition of July 1522.[1] Like the *Paraclesis*, it is written in the form of a letter addressed to 'the pious reader.' As a letter, it is, like the *Paraclesis*, constructed in accordance with the traditional five parts defined in the many letter-writing manuals, including Erasmus' own.[2] As a letter of persuasion, it is, again like the *Paraclesis*, written in an emotional style. There are, moreover, some significant thematic parallels between the two letters, in particular the recognition that the natural revelation given to the pagans of antiquity in some measure anticipated the gospel. But the *De philosophia evangelica* directs the reader much more forcefully to answer a question that was only implied in the *Paraclesis*: if the gospel philosophy had been anticipated in both pagan and Hebrew thought, what was the purpose of the Incarnation? It was a question Erasmus answered with his own humanist brand of the historic doctrine of 'recapitulation': as the perfect teacher, Christ summed up in himself, that is, represented, all the 'precepts and examples of perfect goodness' that had been previously realized only 'piecemeal.' As the true 'Word,' he offers in himself all that had ever been sought from books by holy men.

In this little piece one will recognize also reminiscences of the *Methodus* and the *Ratio*: certainly, the notion of the perfect 'circle and harmony' of Christ's life, but more emphatically a consideration of the reverence and humility required to approach the mysteries – a discussion here in the *De philosophia evangelica*, which, though brief, is nevertheless especially apt as the reader is led to reflect upon the mystery of mysteries, the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Two texts were used in preparing this translation: the July 1522 edition, from the collection of the Gemeente Bibliotheek, Rotterdam, and the January 1523 edition, from Leiden University Library. Both are well printed. The few discrepancies are insignificant and are clearly the compositor's errors.

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1 For the treatise as both preface and afterword see the Introductory Note to 'Separate Latin Editions' 715. The treatise is sometimes identified (as in Allen Ep 1010 introduction) by its first words *quamquam in rebus divinis*, translated below as '[the human mind] … when it confronts matters that are divine.' Here we have given the work the title by which it is commonly known and as it is identified in LB.

2 Cf the Translator's Note to *Paraclesis* 394–5 with nn3, 5.

# ON GOSPEL PHILOSOPHY

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE PIOUS READER, GREETING

The human mind, however perceptive in other things, is often blinded when it confronts matters that are divine and is repeatedly compelled to echo the exclamation of St Paul, who, 'caught up to the third heaven,'[3] had heard things so profound that they could not profitably be revealed to souls still weighed down by mortal flesh; yet when he was writing to the Romans, and the progress of his discourse had led his deliberation to the very threshold of the counsels of God, suddenly overcome by awe and wonder he exclaims: 'O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are his judgments, how unsearchable his ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counsellor?'[4] Then submitting the weakness of human understanding to the majesty of God's divinity, which orders all things for the best even though we cannot see the purpose of his design, he says, 'To him be honour and glory for ever and ever.'[5] Withdrawing thus in reverence from the majesty he had adored, he turns to moral instruction: 'I beseech you, brethren,' he says, 'by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice.'[6] The prophet, too, exclaims, 'The judgments of the Lord are a great deep.'[7]

There is, however, a point to which the devout curiosity of Christians may rightfully proceed, with this proviso that as soon as they realize, as Paul did, that the perception of the human mind does not endure that 'light which no man can approach unto'[8] in which the heavenly Father dwells, they with-

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3 2 Cor 12:2. In his annotations on 2 Corinthians 12 Erasmus offers no explanation of the 'third heaven,' but in his paraphrase on 2 Cor 12:2 he distinguishes the 'third heaven' from 'Paradise,' CWE 43 274.

4 Rom 11:33–4. Erasmus cites the Vulgate, 'O the depths of the riches of the wisdom'; for Erasmus' understanding of the passage see his annotations on Rom 11:33 ('of the riches of wisdom,' 'incomprehensible,' and 'untraceable') CWE 56 316–17 and on Rom 11:34 ('the understanding of the Lord').

5 Rom 11:36. Erasmus cites from the Vulgate, as in the 1527 edition, 'to him be honour and glory'; his own text read (with the preferred text) 'to him be glory.'

6 Rom 12:1

7 Ps 36:6 (VG 35:7). The 'prophet' is David, the 'psalmist'; cf 2 Sam 23:1–2; Acts 2:25–31 and 4:25–6; also the paraphrases on these verses from Acts, which emphasize David's prophetic foresight inspired by the 'prophetic Spirit,' CWE 50 20–1, 36.

8 1 Tim 6:16

draw in adoration, they bow before the inscrutable mystery of God, they recognize their own weakness and attend rather 'to the evil and good that has been done within their own house.'[9]

But somehow human curiosity directs all the powers of the mind towards those matters particularly that are both farthest removed from human understanding and are least conducive to the leading of a holy life[10] – most disputations on the divine essence, for example.[11] Now no mystery is of greater importance to us than the indescribable plan by which God, through his Son, restored the human race. I have frequently dwelt in contemplation of this design and have sometimes thought that it would be worth inquiring why it was important for God's very Son to become man and to make known to us the way of salvation through his own teaching; for it must have been very important indeed. Yet scarcely anything is revealed in gospel literature that had not been revealed many centuries before in the books of the Old Testament, some things even in the writings of philosophers.[12] Plato's Socrates, to name no other, taught that the soul survives the body and is rewarded or punished in accordance with the merits of its former life.[13] He also teaches that a man is not just who would rather cease to be just than to put up with a reputation for injustice.[14] He teaches that the mind is to be led

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9 Homer *Odyssey* 4.392 (the Greek cited), but with a change in the possessive pronoun from second to third person to fit the context

10 On 'curiosity' see *Methodus* 427 with n14. On the proper exercise of curiosity compare Thomas à Kempis on the sacrament: 'A dutiful and humble inquiry into the truth is permissible provided that you are always ready to be taught and to follow attentively the sensible lines of investigation initiated by the Fathers,' but 'you should refrain from excessive and profitless investigation of the profound depths of this sacrament if you do not wish to be submerged in the deep waters of doubt' *De imitatione Christi* 3.18.4 and 3.18.1.

11 Cf Thomas à Kempis *De imitatione Christi* 1.1.7: 'What will you gain from profound discussions concerning the Trinity if you lack humility and so displease the Trinity? ... Learning is not blameworthy, nor is any type of knowledge, for knowledge is held to be good in itself and ordained by God … but a good conscience and a virtuous life are always to be preferred' *De imitatione Christi* 1.3.23. Cf *Ratio* 699 with n1087.

12 Cf *Paraclesis* 415 with n65 and *Ratio* 550 with n308. The theme was common in Christian antiquity; cf eg Tertullian *De testimonio animae* 1.1–2. For Luther's attack on this comment see *Purgatio adversus epistolam Lutheri* CWE 78 448–50.

13 On the immortality of the soul see Plato *Phaedo* 70A–107A, particularly the concluding statement 106E–107A; on rewards and punishments after death, *Phaedo* 113D–114C.

14 Cf Plato *Republic* 2.361C–D.

from love of visible things to devotion to those things that exist truly and for all time.[15] He teaches that death is not to be feared but rather to be desired by one who has lived his life well.[16] He teaches that no one should trust in what he has done; however, if he has tried his best to live a pure life, he may justifiably entertain a good hope of a gracious God.[17] Do not these precepts accord with the following precepts of the Gospels? 'And some will go away into everlasting life, but others into everlasting fire';[18] and 'Blessed shall ye be when men shall reproach you, and blessed when they shall persecute you for righteousness' sake';[19] and 'Lay not up for yourselves treasures in your treasure house upon earth';[20] and 'Labour for the food that does not perish';[21] and 'Fear not those who kill the body';[22] and 'When you shall have done all say, "We are unprofitable servants."'[23]

Furthermore, was not that law of love, which by itself embraces all the laws,[24] set out plainly and carefully in the Old Testament? 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your mind, and with all your strength; and your neighbour as yourself.'[25] Could anything be impressed on the mind more carefully? Could anything be expressed more effectively? Again, those commandments of gospel charity, by which we are enjoined to be merciful and kind to those in want, are so forcefully taught in the books of the prophets and the Old Testament that they could scarcely be clearer

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15 Cf *Paraclesis* 416 with n71. Erasmus refers evidently to the Platonic notion of the 'Ideas' or 'Forms,' which are absolute and unchanging (*Republic* 476A–480), and to the progress of the mind attaining to them, imaginatively described in the allegories of the 'line' and the 'cave,' *Republic* 509D–521B. Cf Thomas à Kempis *De imitatione Christi* 1.1.20: 'Strive therefore to withdraw your heart from love of the visible and to transfer your devotion to the invisible.'

16 Cf Plato *Phaedo* 64A–67C and 114D–115A; also *Paraclesis* 415–16 with n70.

17 Cf Plato *Phaedo* 63C.

18 Cf Matt 25:46. Erasmus quoted apparently from memory; both the Vulgate and Erasmus' text read: 'These will go away into everlasting punishment, but the just into everlasting life.'

19 Erasmus quotes Luke 6:22, then cites freely Matt 5:10.

20 Matt 6:19

21 Cf John 6:27.

22 Matt 10:28

23 Luke 17:10 (abbreviated)

24 Cf Matt 22:37–40

25 Cf Deut 6:5; and Lev 19:18. 'Heart, mind, strength' are the three faculties for the expression of love, as in Deut 6:5.

or more carefully expressed. Isaiah cries, 'Relieve the oppressed, judge for the fatherless, defend the widow.'[26] Again in another place, 'Let those who are broken go free and break asunder every burden. Deal your bread to the hungry, and bring the needy and the harbourless into your house: when you shall see one naked, cover him.'[27] Christ teaches, 'Give to every man who asks of you.'[28] But the book of Deuteronomy says this same thing even more effectively: 'There shall be no poor,' it says, 'among you; that the Lord your God may bless you'[29] – for to require that care be taken of one who suffers want appears to demand more than to require that help be given to one who requests it.

We can go further. Even that doctrine that seems characteristic of the philosophy of the gospel and defines wherein lies Christian blessedness, even this can be heard in Isaiah. Our Lord Jesus said, 'Blessed are the poor; blessed are they that thirst; blessed are they that mourn.'[30] See how Isaiah agrees with this: 'Behold,' he says, 'my servants shall eat, but you shall be hungry; behold, my servants shall drink, but you shall be thirsty; behold, my servants shall rejoice, but you shall be ashamed; behold, my servants shall praise for joy of heart, but you shall cry for sorrow of heart.'[31] Christ says, 'Blessed are you when men shall hate you.' What says Isaiah? 'Fear not,' says he, 'the dishonour of men, neither be diminished by their scorn.'[32] Finally, what seemed most characteristic of gospel perfection, 'Do not return

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26 Isa 1:17 VG; cf DV. In this and the following paragraphs Erasmus appears to cite the New Testament passages freely, and probably from memory. Of the Old Testament citations Isa 1:17, 65:13–14, and 58:6–7 are exact quotations from the Vulgate, while Deut 15:4, Isa 51:7 and 66:5, and Zech 8:17 represent rather a close translation of the Septuagint. The comparison here of Old Testament passages with New Testament passages to show the 'harmony' of Old Testament and New Testament may reflect the influence of Tertullian's *Adversus Marcionem* 4.14.7–15 and 4.16.1; for Tertullian's influence on Erasmus' New Testament scholarship, especially in *1522* and *1523*, see *Ratio* 516 with n121 and 547 with n290.

27 Isa 58:6–7

28 Luke 6:30; cf Matt 5:42.

29 Cf Deut 15:4.

30 Cf Luke 6:20–1; Matt 5:3, 6, and 4.

31 Isa 65:13–14

32 Luke 6:22; Isa 51:7

wrong for wrong,' 'Love your enemies,' 'Behave well to those who behave badly,'[33] Isaiah also taught when he said, 'Say to those who hate you, "You are our brothers"';[34] Zechariah, too, when he taught, 'Let no one be mindful of the wrongdoing of his neighbour.'[35] Again, when the Lord says through the prophet, 'Vengeance is mine, and I will repay.'[36]

Even examples of gospel perfection are not wanting in the Old Testament. Moses asks to be blotted from the book of God if he did not pardon the sin of his rebellious people,[37] and Aaron intercedes for those who conspired against him.[38] Nor are examples lacking of brave men who suffered death for righteousness' sake, just as gospel martyrs have done.[39]

If anyone asks for miracles, he will find the dead raised;[40] a leper healed;[41] a cruse of oil that did not fail; a barrel of meal that did not diminish;[42] fire sent down from heaven that consumed the flesh of a victim drenched with a flood of water;[43] a spring of water that gushed from a rock struck by a rod;[44] bitter, impure water made sweet and pure by a stick cast in it;[45] and many other miracles too well known to need repeating here.

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33 Cf Matt 5:38–9 and 44; cf n62 below.
34 Cf Isa 66:5.
35 Cf Zech 8:17.
36 The words are quoted from Rom 12:19 VG, which approximates Deut 32:35 VG; cf also Ps 94:1.
37 Cf Exod 32:32.
38 Cf Num 16:41–50.
39 Cf Matt 23:34–5, where future gospel martyrs are compared to Old Testament martyrs: Abel (cf Gen 4:8) and Zechariah (cf 2 Chron 24:20–44). Cf also Heb 11:35–8, where tradition referred the reading of 11:37 ('sawn in two') to Isaiah; cf Jerome *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* 15 (on 57:1–2); and for sources of the tradition, CWE 50 61 n53. Cf also the martyrs in the book of Maccabees, 2 Macc 6:18–31 (Eleazar) and 7:1–42 (the seven brothers). In 1518 Erasmus had prepared a little work on the martyrdom of the Maccabees, an enlarged version of which he published in 1524; cf Ep 842 introduction and the introduction to the little piece *Virginis et martyris comparatio* CWE 69 154–7.
40 Cf eg 1 Kings 17:17–24; 2 Kings 4:18–37 and 13:20–1; Ezek 37:1–10.
41 Cf 2 Kings 5:1–19.
42 Cf 1 Kings 17:8–16.
43 Cf 1 Kings 18:22–40. Twelve barrels of water were poured on the bullock and the wood (18: 33–5).
44 Cf Exod 17:1–7.
45 Cf Exod 15:23–5.

Nor is the mystery of the Holy Trinity passed over in silence there.[46] The whole Testament is full of the name of the Father;[47] there are several references to the Son,[48] whom Augustine says he had discovered also in books of the Platonists.[49] The name and power of the Holy Spirit are mentioned.[50] Job taught the resurrection of the body,[51] and before Christ was born, the Pharisees believed it.[52] All these things, I say, had been revealed so many centuries earlier. What, then, was that new thing for the sake of which the Son of God came down to earth, who claims to be the renewer of all things?[53]

I will tell you what I believe – but on the understanding that each person is entitled to maintain his own opinion if he has reached a conclusion

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46 Christian tradition found Old Testament references to Trinitarian doctrine in numerous passages. In Gen 1:26–7, 3:22, and 11:7 God refers to himself in the plural. (On Gen 1:26–7 cf Augustine *De civitate Dei* 16.6.1.) The three angels entertained by Abraham at Mamre (Gen 18:1–8) were interpreted as the three persons of the Trinity (Augustine *De Trinitate* 2.10–11 PL 42 858). The Trisagion (Isa 6:3) and the Aaronic blessing (Num 6:24–6) were thought to imply a triune God. Three verses in Wisdom taken together appear to name the three Persons of the Trinity: 'O God … who made all things by your word … and sent your holy spirit from on high' (Wisd of Sol 9:1 and 17 NRSV). The early apologists were quick to show the connection between the Old and New Testaments. Justin Martyr distinguished different modes of Old Testament prophecy: the utterances of the Father, and of the Son, and the predictions of the Holy Spirit (*First Apology* 36–9). He affirmed that the prophets spoke by the Divine Spirit, glorifying God the Father and proclaiming Christ his Son (*Dialogue with Trypho* 7). Irenaeus (c 115–c 202) believed that whenever God speaks to or appears to a human in the Old Testament, as in the burning bush (Exod 3:1–6), it is the Son who speaks or appears, and it is the Holy Spirit who informs the prophets (*Adversus omnes haereses* 4.10 and 11).

47 Cf eg Ps 89:26 (VG 88:27); Isa 63:16; Jer 3:4.

48 New Testament references to Christ as the Word (John 1:1) and Wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:24) encouraged interpretations of the Word and Wisdom in the Old Testament as Son. Cf Genesis 1 ('God said' = 'Word'); Prov 8:1, 12, 22–31, 7:22–8:1; cf Wisd of Sol 9:1 ('word … wisdom'). But the images in Dan 3:25 (VG 3:92) 'Son of God' (AV; 'son of the gods' RSV) and 7:13 'the Son of Man' (AV; 'a son of man' RSV) could easily be understood as explicit references to Christ as Son.

49 Augustine *Confessions* 7.9; cf *De civitate Dei* 10.29.

50 Cf eg Gen 1:2 'the Spirit of God'; Judg 14:6 'the Spirit of the Lord'; Isa 42:1 'my Spirit'; and Augustine *De Trinitate* 2.10: ' ... no one has doubted that the Spirit of the Lord is the Holy Spirit.'

51 Cf Job 19:26–7.

52 Cf Acts 23:8.

53 Cf Rev 21:5.

that comes nearer the truth. Since the Old Testament was a shadow and a 'preliminary exercise,'[54] as it were, in the philosophy of the gospel, and since the doctrine of the gospel is the restoration and at the same time the perfection of nature as it was first fashioned in its uncorrupted state, it ought not to appear strange if some pagan philosophers were allowed to perceive through their natural powers certain truths that agree with the teaching of Christ, as St Paul testifies, since these same philosophers had the opportunity to infer from the structure of the visible world those things that are comprehended not by the eyes but by the mind, even the eternal power and divinity of God.[55] And it was entirely natural that Christ should offer nothing that had not been anticipated by some shadow or spark in the books of the Old Testament, so that all might be more ready to believe what was not entirely sudden and unexpected. All that Christ provided, therefore, was first promised by the oracles of the holy prophets, was foreshadowed by figures,[56] was even revealed in a fragmentary fashion, like tiny sparks repeatedly flashing out now here, now there, to offer a portent of that light that would later break forth upon the world.

What, then, was distinctive in him who would 'make all things new'?[57] Indeed there were many things. First of all, he alone both taught and represented all the precepts and examples of perfect goodness that had been revealed in the past piece by piece, some by one teacher, some by another. Nor did he simply teach them but implanted them, instilled them, so imprinted them in the hearts of all by his varied parables that they cannot be erased. Furthermore, he so exhibited them in his character and actions that his whole life was nothing but a perfect pattern of perfect love, humility, patient endurance, mercy, and gentleness. You will not find this harmony, this concord of all the virtues, in any of the saints, but in Christ Jesus alone. He truly was the Word, contracted and reduced to a compendium, which in the fullness of time the Lord placed upon the earth, that in him he might recapit-

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54 'Preliminary exercise': *progymnasma*, a transliteration of a Greek word meaning 'preparatory exercise,' 'warm up'

55 Cf Rom 1:19–20. For Erasmus' interpretation of this passage see the annotation on Rom 1:20 ('by the creature of the world') and the paraphrase on the same verse, CWE 42 17–18.

56 'Figures': *figuris*. Cf CWE 50 5 n6. Erasmus expresses here his standard formula to describe the role of the Old Testament in saving-history. Cf the preface to the *Paraphrases* on Matthew and Mark, CWE 45 30 and CWE 49 13, and on Acts 1:1, CWE 50 5.

57 Rev 21:5

ulate everything that is in heaven and earth; and that whatever was formerly sought from so many books, from so many holy men, can now be taken compendiously from Christ alone far more clearly, far more perfectly, than from a compendium.[58] From him, who is the Alpha and Omega of all,[59] we acquire most properly the seeds and elements, as it were, of piety; through him we advance and grow; through him we attain perfection.

And although any spark of goodness that flashed from the saints is the gift of Christ, yet nothing in them is so remarkable but that it is lifeless and dull if compared to the words and actions of Christ. This is not to deny that the lives of some have shone now and again with outstanding examples of goodness, yet their goodness was overshadowed to some degree by human faults. But however you contemplate Christ, you will discover nothing that is not perfect and constant. For who among mortal men was ever so free of sin, so powerful, so distinguished by his mighty signs, so generous towards all in his many acts of kindness? Who so lowered himself, so bore with unfailing gentleness the weakness, the ingratitude, the perversity of human beings to the point of scourging, to the point of spitting, to the point of reviling, to the point of the cross? Who has taught all things so perfectly, and who has carried out so fully what he has taught? Christ excels in the following way too, in that the righteousness of the Jews was circumscribed by narrow bounds and did not extend beyond one nation – and that a small one. 'You shall lend without usury' – to your brother.[60] 'Be not mindful of the wrongdoing' – of your brother.[61] 'Let no one be in want' – among you.[62] But Christ desired that his philosophy should be applied to all nations throughout the world: 'Give to everyone that asks you.'[63] 'Do good to all, even to your enemies.'[64] 'Pray

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58 In this sentence Erasmus offers an exposition of *ἀνακεφαλαιόω* 'recapitulate,' found in the New Testament only in Rom 13:9 and Eph 1:10. He annotated the word in both passages, respectively ('it is restored') and (*instaurare*), and translated the former as *summatim comprehenditur* 'is summarily embraced,' the latter as *summatim instauraret* 'was summarily renewed [or 'restored'].' The exposition here in the *De philosophia evangelica* closely resembles his paraphrase on the word in Eph 1:10 CWE 43 307. On 'compendium' cf *Ratio* 488 with n1.

59 Cf Rev 1:8.

60 Deut 23:19–20

61 Zech 8:17; cf n33 above.

62 Deut 15:4; cf n27 above.

63 Matt 5:42; cf n26 above.

64 Cf Matt 5:44. These words are found in a variant reading but are included in both VG and ER.

for all, even for those that persecute you.'[65] Furthermore, he not only taught and insisted upon the resurrection of the body but also proved it in himself by his coming to life again.

And so it is no wonder if the whole world, formerly divided by diverse schools of philosophy and religious sects, embraced with one accord the gospel philosophy.[66] Let us too embrace what our master and prince has left us and strive to spread his philosophy far and wide. This will come to pass if we commend it to all by the blamelessness of our lives and by our love for one another. It was through commendation of this kind not so many years ago that the gospel philosophy was spread through every corner of the earth within a few years, and the forces of the world fought back in vain. For just as the name of God is glorified by the upright conduct of Christians and is dishonoured and defamed by our sinful conduct,[67] so by our conduct others are drawn to a love of the gospel or are estranged from it.

For a long time now the world has been at war with Christ; indeed, wherever there is a passion for worldly things, the world is found. The gospel truth offends all who are the slaves of worldly things. They have conspired together in their accursed hearts, and they rise up repeatedly against the heavenly Word, saying, 'Come, let us deal with him, for he does oppose our works.'[68] Let us, then, strive against them with strong, unvanquished hearts; not with insults, not with threats, not with force of arms or with wrongdoing but with simple goodness, with acts of kindness, gentleness, and patience. In this way, gospel truth prevails. Christ still lives and reigns, who knows how to turn to his glory both the assaults of the wicked and the sufferings of the good. To him be honour and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

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65 Cf Matt 5:44.

66 For the same thought more fully expressed see Erasmus' letter to Henry VIII, dedicating the *Paraphrase on Luke*, Ep 1381:283–302, 339–43; cf also *Ratio* 468–9 with n419 and 573 with n439.

67 Cf Rom 2:21–4.

68 Cf Wisd of Sol 2:12.

# Additional Texts in the Editions of the New Testament 1516–35

Anyone who has been fortunate enough to pick up, handle, leaf through, perhaps even read the original volumes of Erasmus' five editions of the New Testament will recognize at once the strategies by which these volumes were each made to seem an impressive whole. Nothing has been placed in these books that does not contribute to the effect Erasmus' scholarship has on its readers, an effect in his day often positive, sometimes negative. The introductory essay on 'The New Testament Scholarship of Erasmus' has endeavoured to describe in their original sequence the parts that made the whole in each volume of each edition. It was deemed important, however, that in this volume (CWE 41) the major hermeneutical essays – the *Paraclesis*, the *Methodus*, the *Apologia*, and the *Ratio* – should be given the distinction and pre-eminence due them. At the same time, we must not lose sight of the many pieces – usually small, usually pre- or postliminary to the main enterprise – that contributed often decisively to Erasmus' entire endeavour in presenting his New Testament. Consequently, breaking the sequence in which these pieces originally appeared, we have assembled them together in this last part so that the reader will have access to virtually all the narrative portions composed by Erasmus that contextualized the presentation of text and annotation of each edition. This has meant that among other pieces now freshly translated we publish here for the convenience of the reader some letters that are also published in the Correspondence volumes of *Collected Works of Erasmus*. To set any or all of these narratives in their original context the reader may, if needed or desired, consult the essay 'The New Testament Scholarship of Erasmus' above.

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# TITLE PAGES TO THE TEXT OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AND TO THE ANNOTATIONS IN THE FIVE EDITIONS

introduced, translated, and annotated by
ALEXANDER DALZELL

Erasmus' titles are generally more than a simple shorthand device for identifying a book. They are also likely, as in the New Testament title pages, to include some brief indication of the contents of the work, its purpose, and scope, and to suggest to the reader how it should be approached. Erasmus' title pages are carefully planned and sometimes attractively decorated. They are clearly intended to provide the reader with clues to the character of the work that follows.

Each of the five editions of the New Testament has its own title page, and all but the first edition also have separate title pages for the *Annotations*. The title to the first edition sets the pattern for the rest; those to the second and third editions are similar but have some significant changes. For the fourth edition of 1527, instead of a formal title page, we have a letter to the reader, ostensibly written by Johann Froben the publisher. The final edition of 1535 has the shortest title of all; it seems that by that time there was less need for explanation and defence.

From the beginning Erasmus presents his work as a 'careful revision and correction of the complete New Testament.'[1] As H.J. de Jonge has pointed out, 'New Testament' in this context can refer only to the Vulgate, for it is the Vulgate that is being revised and corrected.[2] It is evident also from the title of this first edition that the primary emphasis in the revision will be textual and philological; hence the references to important manuscripts and to the Greek *veritas*, that is, the true reading that lies behind what is to be found in existing and available Greek manuscripts. Nine of the Fathers are cited, but once again the emphasis is on the text as it is handed down in their citations of Scripture or implied by their interpretations. As for the *Annotations*, Erasmus makes it clear that these are to be viewed not as a commentary but as explanatory notes whose purpose is to justify departures from the traditional text. The same point is made more emphatically in the prefatory letter to the *Annotations*, where Erasmus observes, 'What I have written are short annotations, not a commentary,'[3] and the reader is warned that what is being offered is only a 'light luncheon' and not a full meal.

The final sentences of this elaborate title warn the reader against jumping to conclusions when faced with an unfamiliar text. Even before the first

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1 Cf the first sentence of 'Title Page of the *Novum instrumentum* 1516' 743 just below.

2 de Jonge *Novum Testamentum* 394–413. Cf *Apologia* 460 with n30.

3 Ep 373:5–6 ('Prefaces and Letters' 782). On 'annotations' as a genre see 'New Testament Scholarship' 50–5.

edition was printed, Erasmus knew that a 'corrected' version of the Vulgate would face hostile criticism. Already in May 1515 we find him defending his methods at the end of a long letter to Maarten van Dorp (Ep 337). The same testy defensiveness is evident in the title pages of *1519* and *1522*, where he adds, 'It is not criticism that is unhealthy but condemning what you have not examined,' and this is followed by the declaration, in large type, that the work does not anywhere depart from 'the judgment of the church.' We may perhaps detect something of the same polemical note in the elaborate decoration of the verso of the title page of the 1519 edition, where the letter of Leo to Erasmus was printed. The decoration, designed by Ambrosius Holbein, the older brother of Hans Holbein, was also used for the separate title pages to the *Annotations* of *1519* and *1522*. Holbein's design, which was inspired by the famous picture of Calumny by Apelles,[4] shows Calumny dragging her victim before a man with large ears and flanked by figures representing Ignorance and Suspicion, an apt image for the reception Erasmus expected to encounter on the publication of his work.[5]

Taken together, the title pages provide some indication of the evolution of the work through its five editions. Erasmus was disappointed by the number of errors and inadequacies he discovered in the first edition and assures the reader that the second edition is 'now much more carefully revised, corrected, and translated.' Moreover, the new edition is not only more correct, it is also more complete, for the annotations have been greatly expanded and Athanasius and Nazianzus have been added to the list of

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4 Apelles (fourth century BC) was regarded in antiquity as the greatest of Greek painters. His allegorical picture of Calumny, which does not survive, is described by Lucian in *Calumniae non temere credendum* 2–5.

5 See David Cast *The Calumny of Apelles* (New Haven and London 1981) 98–9: 'When it [the Calumny design] appeared on an edition of Erasmus' translation of the New Testament, it is difficult not to see its presence as a kind of commentary on the contents of the volume and the response this new text was to arouse.' The Calumny design occupies the lower panel of the decoration of the title page; the top panel shows the victory of the German Arminius over the Roman forces under Varus in the Teutoburg Forest in AD 9. Given the jealousies that existed between Italian and northern humanists, this panel too could be seen as allegorical, but it is dangerous to push such interpretations too far. As Cast points out, Holbein's Calumny design was first used by Froben for an edition of Maximus of Tyre in 1519. See further 'Title Page of the *Annotations* 1519' 746 with n1, and the illustration, 747 below.

Fathers consulted.[6] The title does not mention the additional manuscripts consulted by Erasmus (apart from the bald statement, borrowed from the first edition, that he had consulted many), but this information is to be found in the *Apologia*.[7]

The title page for the third edition is, mutatis mutandis, the same as that for the second. The title page for the fourth edition, as we have seen, is different from all the others. Froben's letter is written, naturally, from a printer's point of view. It does, however, mention additional Greek and Latin manuscripts made available to Erasmus for this edition. But the main emphasis is on the quality of the printing and on the new material added to this volume for the convenience of the reader: the Vulgate printed in parallel columns alongside Erasmus' own translation to facilitate comparison, an account of the 'Travels of Peter and Paul,' Chrysostom's prologue to the Pauline Epistles, and an 'index of noteworthy passages.'[8]

The title page for the fifth edition is the briefest and least informative of the five. The boast that it has been 'so greatly enlarged that it could almost be taken for a new work' is hard to justify.[9] We may note that the printer's device remains as before, except that the text on either side of the caduceus now reads 'FRO BEN' instead of 'IOAN FROB.' Johann Froben had died in 1527, and the press was now under the control of Hieronymus Froben and Nicolaus Episcopius, whose names appear together at the end of the New Testament text.[10]

The separate title pages to the *Annotations* in the editions of 1519, 1522, 1527, and 1535 merely repeat, in much abbreviated form, what is already to be found in the main titles. The first two are elaborately decorated.

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6 Although Erasmus consulted Athanasius and Gregory of Nazianzus in his later editions, he did so somewhat infrequently; they never became standard sources for his annotations.

7 Cf *Apologia* 460–2 with nn31, 34, 35.

8 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 292 with n1240. The 'Travels of Peter and Paul' is translated in this volume, 951–77 below. The 'index' is presumably the subect index; the edition of 1519 had provided a subject index, but not the edition of 1522, so that in this sense a subject index was new in *1527*.

9 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 361 with n1568 and 365.

10 On Froben and Episcopius as successors to the Froben publishing firm see 'New Testament Scholarship' 360 with n1565.

# [TITLE PAGE OF THE *NOVUM INSTRUMENTUM* 1516]

The complete New Testament,[1] carefully revised and corrected by Erasmus of Rotterdam not only in the light of the original Greek but also in accordance with the evidence of many manuscripts in both languages,[2] manuscripts of great antiquity and correctness, and taking account also of citations, corrections, and interpretations in the most respected authorities, especially Origen, Chrysostom, Cyril, Vulgarius,[3] Jerome, Cyprian, Ambrose, Hilary, and Augustine; also accompanied by annotations to explain to the reader what changes have been made and the reason for making them. Let everyone who loves the true theology read and study these before passing judgment. Do not be upset as soon as you stumble upon a change,[4] but consider if it is a change for the better.

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1 'New Testament': *Novum instrumentum*, the title Erasmus gave to the first edition of his New Testament, although he returned to the more familiar *Novum Testamentum* for all subsequent editions. Strictly, however, *Novum instrumentum* is not the title of the work but refers specifically to the Vulgate. It is the Vulgate that is being 'revised and corrected' (cf Translator's Note 740 above). *Instrumentum* and *Testamentum* are not exact synonyms, but they share a number of meanings in common: 'testimony,' 'evidence,' 'record,' 'document' (especially a legal document). Both words are also commonly used in ecclesiastical Latin to refer to the Old or the New Testament. *Instrumentum* implies a written document, *testamentum* means a covenant whether written or not; see de Jonge *Novum Testamentum* 396 n5. For *instrumentum* see eg Tertullian *Apologeticus* 47.9; Jerome Epp 54.17 and 55.1. For criticism of the term *instrumentum* cf *Methodus* n28 and *Ratio* n288.

2 The claim for the number and antiquity of the manuscripts available for the first edition seems something of an exaggeration, though perhaps a pardonable exaggeration. For Erasmus' Greek and Latin exemplars see Ep 384 introduction; Rummel *Erasmus' Annotations* 35–8; and for the studies of Andrew Brown in ASD see 'New Testament Scholarship' 28 and 43 with nn146 and 192.

3 Vulgarius is a mistake for Theophylact, archbishop of Ochrida, seat of the Bulgarian patriarchate. Erasmus corrected the error on the title page of the second edition of 1519, but it was not generally corrected in the *Annotations* until the third edition of 1522. Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 106 with n461 and 132 with n554.

4 Literally, 'Do not take immediate offence [*offendere*], if you come upon [*offenderis*] something that has been changed,' but the pun on the two meanings of *offendere* cannot be brought out in translation.

# NOVVM IN

ſtrumentū omne, diligenter ab ERASMO ROTERODAMO recognitum & emendatum, nō ſolum ad græcam ueritatem, uerumetiam ad multorum utriuſq; linguæ codicum, eorumq; ueterum ſimul & emendatorum fidem, poſtremo ad probatiſſimorum autorum citationem, emendationem & interpretationem, præcipue, Origenis, Chryſoſtomi, Cyrilli, Vulgarij, Hieronymi, Cypriani, Ambroſij, Hilarij, Auguſtini, una cū Annotationibus, quæ lectorem doceant, quid qua ratione mutatum ſit.

Quiſquis igitur amas ueram Theologiam, lege, cognoſce, ac deinde iudica. Neq; ſtatim offendere, ſi quid mutatum offenderis, ſed expende, num in melius mutatum ſit.

APVD INCLYTAM GERMANIAE BASILEAM.

CVM PRIVILEGIO MAXIMILIANI CAESARIS AVGVSTI, NE QVIS ALIVS IN SACRA ROMANI IMPERII DITIONE, INTRA QVATVOR ANNOS EXCVDAT, AVT ALIBI EXCVSVM IMPORTET.

Title page, *Novum instrumentum* 1516, with 'Privilege'
Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, University of Toronto

At the celebrated city of Basel in Germany[5]

[Printer's device][6]

With a privilege[7]
from the august emperor Maximilian, forbidding anyone within the sacred domain of the Roman empire for a period of four years to print it or, if it is printed elsewhere, to import it.

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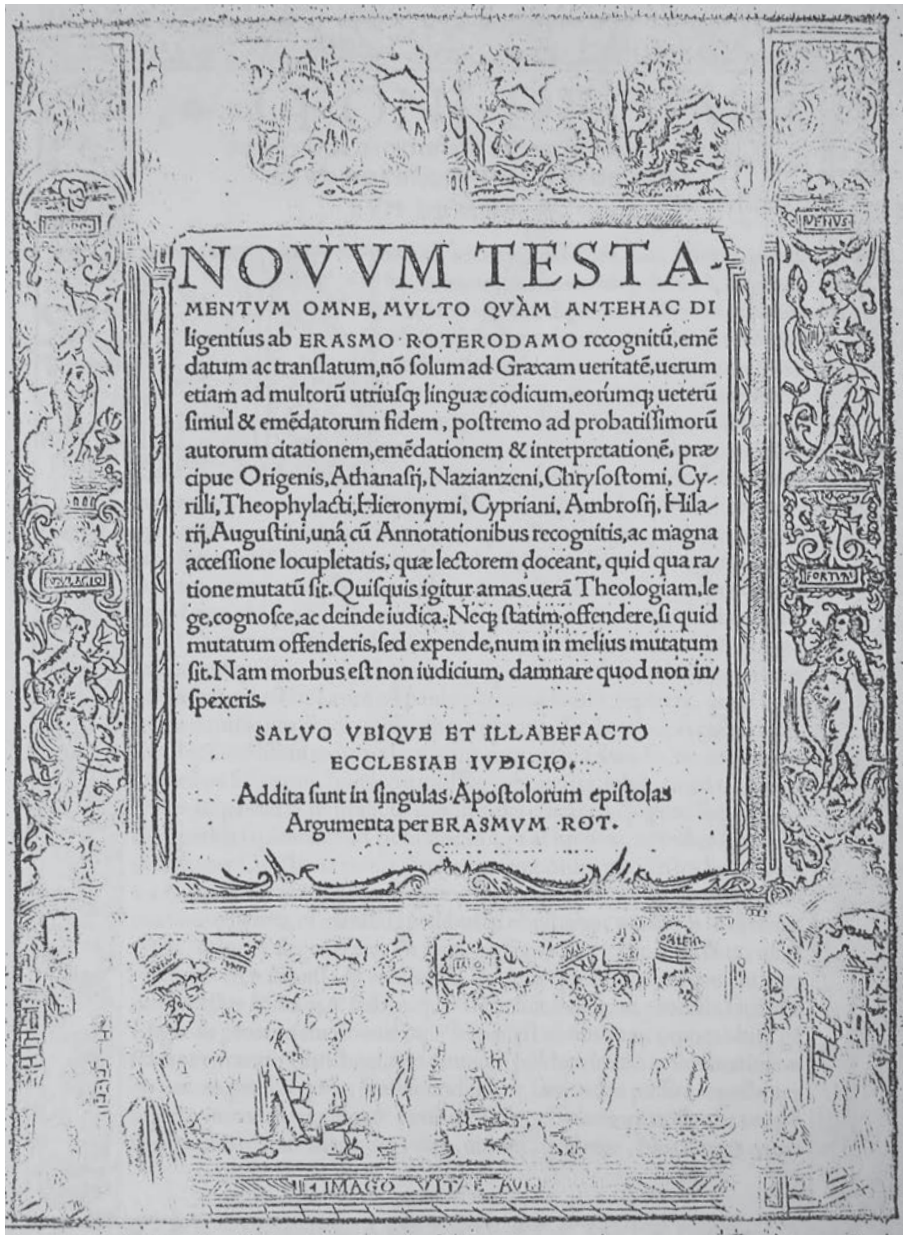
5 Basel is often referred to in publications from the Froben Press as a city in Germany. Such an identification would have been challenged by Swiss patriots like Henricus Glareanus and possibly Bonifacius Amerbach; cf Allen Ep 2846:158–62.

6 At this point the famous printer's mark of the Froben Press is inserted (see illustration, 750 below): it is composed of the caduceus, an upright staff entwined with two serpents and held by two hands that emerge from clouds (a sign of divine inspiration); a heraldic dove is perched on top of the staff. The motif of the serpent and the dove comes from Matt 10:16. For its significance see G. Marc'hadour 'Symbolisme de la colombe et du serpent' *Moreana* 1 (1963) 47–63; *Adagia* II i 1 CWE 31 15.

7 Privileges, given by the pope, the emperor, or kings, were a way of protecting publishers from the pirating of their work by other printers. Here the privilege is for four years; the Froben edition of Jerome, published in the same year, received a privilege for five years from Emperor Maximilian and Pope Leo X (Ep 802:11n). A privilege did not always assure copyright to the publisher, although when breached, it was possible to sue. Nor were privileges always easy to obtain. Froben and his friends tried many times to secure a French privilege from Francis I for the monumental edition of Augustine, apparently without success; cf Ep 2291:22–6. On privileges given to printers in the Renaissance see Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin *L'apparition du livre* (Paris 1958) 327–75, esp 365–70.


NOVVM TESTA-
MENTVM OMNE, MVLTO QVÀM ANTEHAC DI
ligentius ab ERASMO ROTERODAMO recognitũ, emẽ
datum ac translatum, nõ solum ad Græcam ueritatẽ, uerum
etiam ad multorũ utriusq; linguæ codicum, eorúmq; ueterũ
simul & emẽdatorum fidem, postremo ad probatissimorũ
autorum citationem, emẽdationem & interpretationẽ, præ-
cipue Origenis, Athanasij, Nazianzeni, Chrysostomi, Cy-
rilli, Theophylacti, Hieronymi, Cypriani, Ambrosij, Hila-
rij, Augustini, unà cũ Annotationibus recognitis, ac magna
accessione locupletatis, quæ lectorem doceant, quid qua ra-
tione mutatũ sit. Quisquis igitur amas uerã Theologiam, le
ge, cognosce, ac deinde iudica. Neq; statim offendere, si quid
mutatum offenderis, sed expende, num in melius mutatum
sit. Nam morbus est non iudicium, damnare quod non in-
spexeris.
SALVO VBIQVE ET ILLABEFACTO
ECCLESIAE IVDICIO.
Addita sunt in singulas Apostolorum epistolas
Argumenta per ERASMVM ROT.

Title page, *Novum Testamentum* 1519, with border
Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, University of Toronto

# [TITLE PAGE OF THE *NOVUM TESTAMENTUM* 1519]

The same as in 1516 with the following changes:

**1/** For 'carefully revised and corrected' read 'now much more carefully revised, corrected, and translated.'
**2/** After 'Origen' add 'Athanasius, Nazianzus.'
**3/** For 'Vulgarius' read 'Theophylact.'
**4/** After 'Annotations' add 'revised and greatly augmented.'
**5/** The place of publication, the printer's mark, and the privilege are all omitted and in their place (after 'change for the better') is the following:

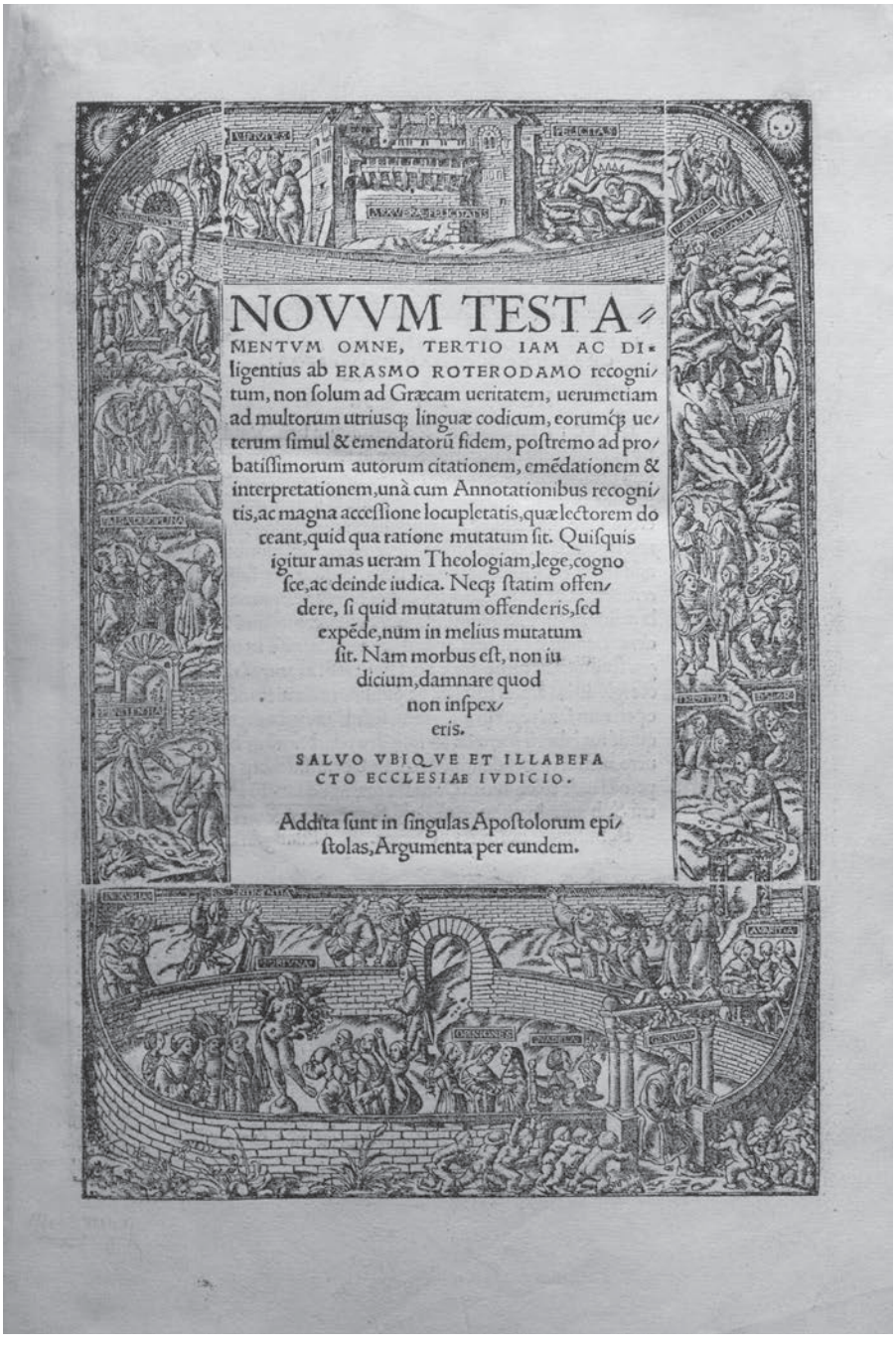
For it is not criticism that is unhealthy, but condemning what you have not examined.

EVERYWHERE PRESERVING SECURE AND UNSHAKEN
THE JUDGMENT OF THE CHURCH[1]

A summary of the contents of each of the Letters of the apostles has been added by Erasmus of Rotterdam.[2]

* * * * *

1 The two lines in capitals imitate the Latin printed, reflecting the importance Erasmus placed upon the statement; cf *Contra morosos* n9.
2 A reference to the Arguments composed by Erasmus to take the place of the traditional Arguments that had been used in the 1516 edition. Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 112 with n481.



NOVVM TESTA-
MENTVM OMNE, TERTIO IAM AC DI-
ligentius ab ERASMO ROTERODAMO recogni-
tum, non ſolum ad Græcam ueritatem, uerumetiam
ad multorum utriusq; linguæ codicum, eorumq; ue-
terum ſimul & emendatorũ fidem, poſtremo ad pro-
batiſſimorum autorum citationem, emẽdationem &
interpretationem, unà cum Annotationibus recogni-
tis, ac magna acceſſione locupletatis, quæ lectorem do
ceant, quid qua ratione mutatum ſit. Quiſquis
igitur amas ueram Theologiam, lege, cogno
ſce, ac deinde iudica. Neq; ſtatim offen-
dere, ſi quid mutatum offenderis, ſed
expẽde, num in melius mutatum
ſit. Nam morbus eſt, non iu
dicium, damnare quod
non inſpex-
eris.

SALVO VBIQVE ET ILLABEFA
CTO ECCLESIAE IVDICIO.

Addita ſunt in ſingulas Apoſtolorum epi-
ſtolas, Argumenta per eundem.

Title page, *Novum Testamentum* 1522, with border
Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, University of Toronto

# [TITLE PAGE OF THE *NOVUM TESTAMENTUM* 1522]

The same as in 1519 with these changes:

**1/** For 'much more carefully revised, corrected, and translated' read 'for the third time more carefully revised.'
**2/** The list of Fathers consulted is omitted, although the phrase 'and finally taking account of citations, corrections, and interpretations in the most respected authorities' is retained.
**3/** For 'added by Erasmus of Rotterdam' read 'added by the same.'

IOANNES FROBENIVS CANDIDO
LECTORI S. D.

# EN NOVVM TESTA

MENTVM, EX ERASMI ROTERODAMI RECOGNI/
tione, iam quartum damus studiose lector, adiecta uulgata transla/
tione, quo protinus ipsis oculis conferre possis, quid conueniat quid
dissideat. Hic non sine graui tedio nostro, tibi tediũ ademimus. Ad/
iecta est Pauli peregrinatio Latina, cum præfatione Chrysostomi, in
omnes epistolas Pauli. In annotationibus præterquam quod autor
exactiora reddidit omnia, magnam accessionem adiunxit ex Græco/
rum uoluminibus eçp uetustissimis exemplaribus Latinis, quæ nu/
per est nactus. Cuius in recognoscendo summã diligentiam, nos in
excudendo sumus imitati. Si proxima æditio satisfecit, facebe
ris hic Frobenium à Frobenio superatum. Accessit & loco/
rum annotatu dignorum index non aspernandus.
Fruere, nostrisçp conatibus faue.

ἐν μαργάριτον τίμιον
ἀπόδου καὶ ἄπαντα λάμβανε.

En margaritum nobile.
Eme, si cupis ditescere.

BASILEAE ANNO M. D. XXVII.

Title page, *Novum Testamentum* 1527 (letter of Johann Froben 'To the Reader')
Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, University of Toronto

# [TITLE PAGE OF THE *NOVUM TESTAMENTUM* 1527]

JOHANN FROBEN TO THE GENTLE READER, GREETING

Here, studious reader, we offer you the New Testament, revised by Erasmus of Rotterdam, now in its fourth edition, to which has been added the Vulgate translation, so that you can see at a glance where it agrees and where it differs. In this way we have freed you from some tedious effort at the cost of much considerable effort on our part. We have also added the *Travels of Paul* in Latin[1] and Chrysostom's preface to all of Paul's letters. In the *Annotations*, besides producing greater accuracy throughout, the author has made a large number of additions from Greek manuscripts and from some very ancient Latin copies, which he lately got hold of.[2] We have given the same scrupulous care to the printing as he gave to this revision. If the last edition proved satisfactory, you will admit that here Froben has been outdone by Froben. There is also an index (by no means negligible) of noteworthy passages. May you find profit from our work and be pleased with it!

[Printer's device]

Sell all that you have and acquire
This one precious pearl.[3]
Look, what a wonderful pearl!
Buy it if you want to be rich.[4]

At Basel, in the year 1527

* * * * *

1 In the 1527 edition Erasmus added before the text of Acts his *Peregrinatio apostolorum*. It had already been printed as a preface to the *Paraphrase on Acts* (1524); cf Translator's Note 950 n8. Chrysostom's preface preceded the text of Romans; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 252 with n1034.

2 For the witnesses Erasmus had available in preparing the fourth edition, which included the manuscripts from Constance and the Complutensian Polyglot Bible, see 'New Testament Scholarship' 287–91, 311–13 and *Apologia* 461 with n34.

3 A couplet in Greek iambics, modelled on the parable of the pearl of great price in Matt 13:46

4 A couplet in Latin iambics, similar in sound and sense to the Greek

# NOVVM TESTA-

MENTVM IAM QVINTVM ACCVRA-
tissima cura recognitum à DES. ERASMO ROTER.
cum Annotationibus eiusdem ita locupletatis, ut
propémodum opus nouum uideri possit.

ἓν μαργαρίτην τίμιον
ἀπελθὼν πώλησον καὶ ἄγορασε.

En margaritum nobile,
Eme, si cupis ditescere.

BASILEAE ANNO M D XXXV

Cum priuilegio Cæsareæ maiestatis in annos quatuor.

Title page, *Novum Testamentum* 1535, with 'Privilege'
Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, University of Toronto

# [TITLE PAGE OF THE *NOVUM TESTAMENTUM* 1535]

The New Testament, now for the fifth time revised with the most scrupulous care by Erasmus of Rotterdam, along with the same author's *Annotations*, so greatly enlarged that it could almost be taken for a new work

[Printer's device][1]

Sell all that you have and acquire
This one precious pearl.[2]

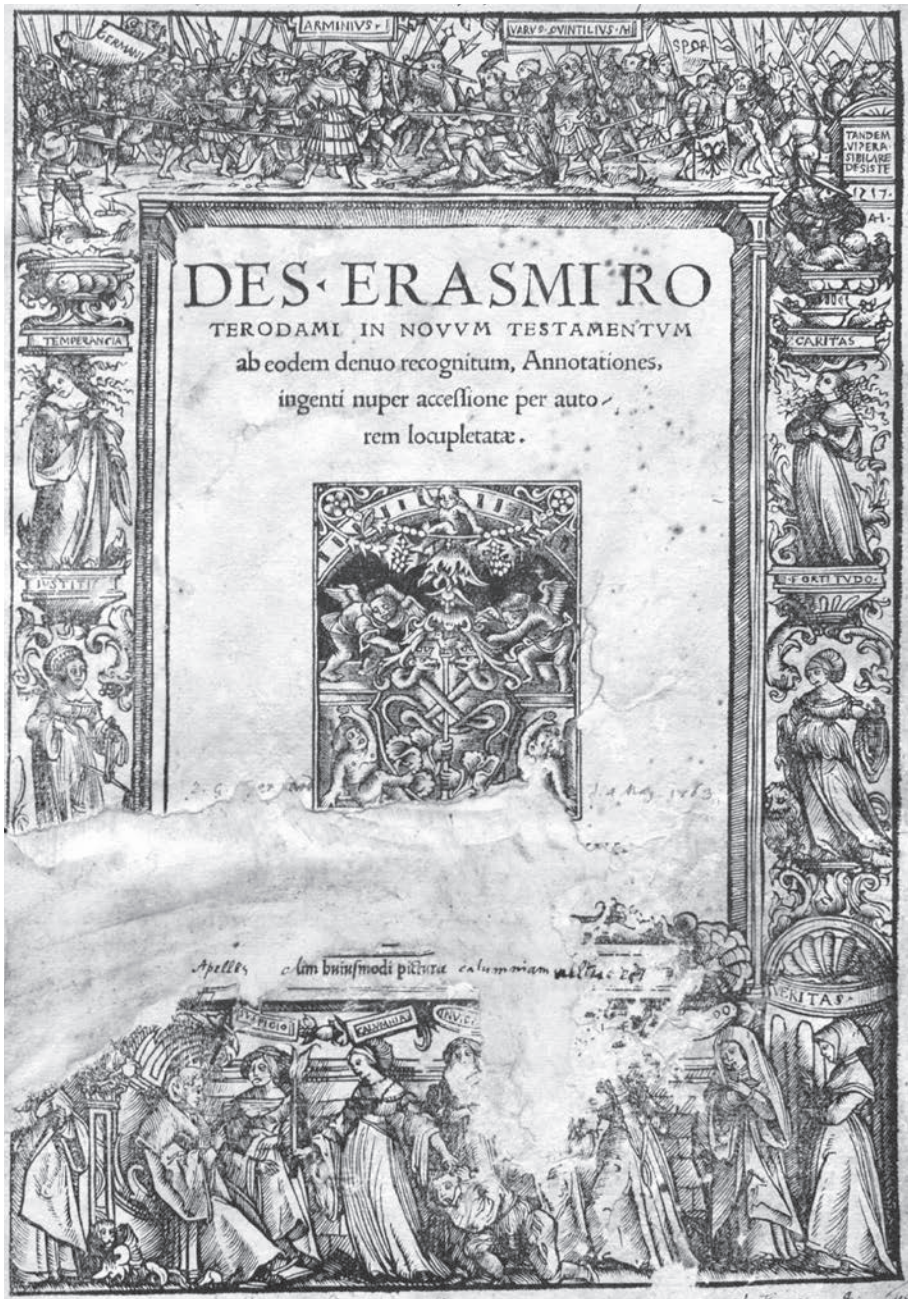
Look, what a wonderful pearl!
Buy it if you want to be rich.

At Basel, in the year 1535

With a privilege from his imperial Majesty covering four years[3]

* * * * *

1 For changes in the printer's device see Translator's Note to 'Title Pages' 742.
2 For this and the following couplet see 'Title Page of the *Novum Testamentum* 1527' 750–1 nn3 and 4 just above.
3 On privileges see 'Title Page of the *Novum instrumentum* 1516' n7.




Title page, *Annotations on the New Testament* 1519
Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, University of Toronto

# [TITLE PAGE OF THE *ANNOTATIONS* 1519]

The *Annotations* of Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam
on his second revised edition of the New Testament,
recently enriched by the author with
much added material

Basel, in the year 1519

Apelles once took revenge on Calumny with a picture of this kind.[1]

* * * * *

1 The reference to Apelles comes in rather abruptly after the title of the work, but it points to a panel in the decoration of this page, designed by Ambrosius Holbein after the description of the famous allegorical painting of Apelles by Lucian; cf the Translator's Note to 'Title Pages' 741 with nn4 and 5. Lucian relates the story (certainly apocryphal) that Apelles painted his picture of Calumny as a way of avenging himself on the slanderer Antiphilus who had accused him of conspiring against Ptolemy.

Title page, *Annotations on the New Testament* 1522
Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, University of Toronto

# [TITLE PAGE OF THE *ANNOTATIONS* 1522]

The Annotations of Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam
on his third revision of the New Testament;
these have likewise been revised by him
and enriched with added material
that will not prove disappointing.

At the celebrated city of Basel in the lands of the Rauraci,[1]
in the year 1522

Apelles once took revenge on Calumny with a picture of this kind.[2]

* * * * *

1 The Rauraci were a people of Gaul who occupied the region bordering on Basel; cf Caesar *Bellum Gallicum* 1.5; Pliny (Elder) *Naturalis historia* 4.102.

2 Cf the preceding 'Title Page of the *Annotations* 1519' 756 n1. The title page of *1522* is, with minor variations in text and image, almost identical to that of *1519*.

DES· ERASMI RO·

TERODAMI IN NOVVM TESTAMENTVM
Annotationes, ab ipſo autore iam quartum recogni
tæ, & ex Græcis codicibus quos poſtea nactus eſt
auctario neutiq; pœnitendo locupletatæ.

APVD INCLYTAM RAVRACORVM
BASILEAM, AN. M. D. XXVII.

Title page, *Annotations on the New Testament* 1527

# [TITLE PAGE OF THE *ANNOTATIONS* 1527]

The *Annotations* of Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam on the New Testament, revised by the author himself now for the fourth time and enriched with some welcome new material taken from Greek codices that later became available to him

[Printer's device][1]

At the celebrated city of Basel in the lands of the Rauraci,[2] in the year 1527

* * * * *

1 The printer's device here does not include the printer's name.
2 Cf 'Title Page of the *Annotations* 1522' 757 n1.

DES. ERASMI ROTE-
RODAMI IN NOVVM TESTAMENTVM ANNO-
tationes, ab ipso autore iam quintum sic reco-
gnitæ, ac locupletatæ, ut propemodum
nouum opus uideri possit.

PLATO
Pulcherrimum uictoriæ genus est, seipsum uincere.

BASILEAE IN OFFICINA FROBENIANA
ANNO M. D. XXXV

Cum priuilegio Cæsareo.

Title page, *Annotations on the New Testament* 1535, with 'Privilege'
Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, University of Toronto

# [TITLE PAGE OF THE *ANNOTATIONS* 1535]

Annotations on the New Testament by
Erasmus of Rotterdam,
now for the fifth time
so revised and enriched
by the author himself
that it might almost be seen
as a new work
FRO [Printers' device] BEN
PLATO
To conquer oneself is the fairest kind of victory[1]
Basel at the Froben Press in the year 1535
With an imperial privilege[2]

* * * * *

1 Plato *Laws* 626E
2 Cf 'Title Page of the *Novum instrumentum* 1516' 745 n7.

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# PREFACES AND LETTERS PRINTED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

introduced, translated, and annotated by

ALEXANDER DALZELL

Several letters were printed within the volumes of Erasmus' five editions of the New Testament. Most important of these are the letter of dedication to Pope Leo X, Leo's brief response, and the preface to the *Annotations*. Other letters include brief notes from the publisher commending the work or pointing to additions or innovations. Although these letters are of different levels of interest and importance, we have thought it best to publish them together as a group. We print, first, letters that appeared with the text of the New Testament (from 1519 *Novum Testamentum* I), then the letters that appeared with the *Annotations* (from 1519 *Novum Testamentum* II), and finally, the *1516* 'Preface to the *Annotations*' and the changes to it from *1519* to *1535*. The letters that follow are:

**1/** Letter of Johann Froben, 1516
**2/** Letter of Erasmus to Leo X, 1516 (dedicatory letter for the New Testament, Ep 384)
**3/** Letter of Leo X to Erasmus, 1518 (Ep 864)
**4/** Letter of Joannes Oecolampadius, 1516
**5/** Letter of Johann Froben, 1519
**6/** Letter of Erasmus to the Pious Reader, 1527
**7/** Letter of Erasmus to the Reader, 1535
**8/** Erasmus to the Pious Reader, 1515 (preface to the *Annotations*, Ep 373)
**9/** The same letter as above (Erasmus to the Pious Reader, 1515), with changes in the New Testament text of 1519–35 identified

In *1516* the New Testament was a single volume in which the annotations with its preface followed the New Testament text. In *1519* the *Annotations* became a second volume introduced by the preface of *1516* (1515) with changes. The letters 'To the Pious Reader' (*1527*) and 'To the Reader' (*1535*) were printed in the *Annotations* volume. It should be noted, however, that both are closely related to the text volume: the first letter serves as a preface to the *1527* 'Index of Errors in the Vulgate' that had been designed to follow the *Contra morosos* and precede the text of the New Testament, but now had been transferred to the end of the *Annotations* volume; the second letter, however, explains the omission of that list entirely in *1535*. All the letters here have been introduced, translated, and annotated by Alexander Dalzell, except Epp 373, 384, and 864, which have been previously published as annotated translations in CWE 3 and 6.

AD

**Letter of Johann Froben, 1516**

This letter was printed immediately following the title page and before the prefatory letter to Leo X in the first edition of the New Testament in 1516 (that is, it was printed on the verso of the title page). It was not repeated in later editions, though there is another and different letter from Froben in the second edition of 1519 (see 777–9 below). There is no letter of Froben's in 1522 except for a brief sentence at the end of the volume introducing a list of errata. A further letter from Froben forms the title page of the edition of 1527. By the date of the final edition of 1535, Froben was dead.

JOHANN FROBEN TO THE PIOUS READER, GREETING

It has always been my ambition, gentle reader, that good authors should issue from our press, especially authors who will inspire the reader to virtuous and pious conduct, and this, as Christ is my witness, is the recompense I seek no less than financial gain. But although in everything I do I try to send out into the world texts that are as accurate as I can make them, yet I have never devoted as much care to any volume as to this. I do not know what profit it will bring me, but I am confident that, with the help of Christ our Lord and master, it will prove of the greatest value to all Christians. So I have spared neither effort nor expense. Indeed, I have used entreaties and rewards to secure several correctors of more than ordinary learning, foremost among whom is Johannes Oecolampadius of Weinsberg, who, besides being commended by his integrity and piety, is an outstanding theologian with an excellent command of the three languages; and Erasmus himself has also supervised this aspect of the work. Yet all these men have been drawn to undertake such a labour more by the religious value of the work than by any thought of gain. Perhaps there are printers who will wish to pirate this edition, for today that saying of Hesiod's is all too true that 'beggar is jealous of beggar and workman of workman.'[1] But I shall accept this with a good grace if only they will surpass, or at least equal, me in fidelity to the text. There are those, however, who do not care how accurate or corrupt are the books they publish as long as they do so at a profit. So remember that this is a matter of great concern to the reader: a man who buys a book that is brimful of errors has got himself a headache, not a book. I warn these piratical

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1 Hesiod *Works and Days* 25–6 (misquoted). Hesiod wrote: 'Potter bears a grudge against potter and workman against workman, / and beggar is jealous of beggar and singer of singer.' See *Adagia* I ii 25.

publishers that if they are rash enough to attempt this while the author is still alive and is kind enough to remain my devoted friend, they may suffer the same fate as befell some publishers over the earlier edition of the *Chiliads*.[2] Farewell, reader, and enjoy this work; and in return grant me this favour, that our enterprise, which is both pious and useful to all men, may not turn out unhappily for me.

Basel, 24 February 1516

**Preface to the New Testament, 1516**

This letter to Leo X forms the preface to the *Novum instrumentum* of 1516. It was reprinted, substantially unaltered, in each of the succeeding editions. Except for the substitution of *sermo* for *verbum* in *1519* and thereafter (see 769 n10 below), all other changes involve small points of style or usage (eg *praestas* for *exhibes* in Allen Ep 384:28) that do not materially affect the sense. The more important changes are listed in the notes.

The letter begins with the customary flattering address that tradition demanded in a dedicatory letter. After this, in a brief paragraph, Erasmus gives an admirably succinct account of the nature and purpose of the book. Using the imagery of the building of the temple in Ezra, he suggests to Leo that the church can most effectively be rebuilt on the basis of a renewed study of the Gospels and the Epistles. It was this noble aim, he explains, that inspired him to provide a purer text, founded on the evidence of the oldest Greek and Latin manuscripts and checked against citations in the church Fathers; the purpose of the annotations is simply to justify the textual changes and clarify obscurities in the text. These are points Erasmus made on the title page and will reinforce in the *Apologia* and frequently elsewhere.

After this summary, almost half of the letter is devoted to a somewhat embarrassed encomium of Archbishop Warham. Warham was one of the most influential and generous of Erasmus' friends and might perhaps have expected the *Novum instrumentum* to be dedicated to him. At one time Erasmus probably intended to do so, but eventually he decided to dedicate his edition

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2 This may be a reference to Matthias Schürer's unauthorized edition of the *Adagia*, which he published in 1509, just a short time before a greatly enlarged edition was issued by the Aldine Press. Clearly Froben is anticipating (correctly) that further editions of the New Testament will continue to appear as long as Erasmus lives. For Erasmus' early promise of a second edition see 'New Testament Scholarship' 103 with n430.

of Jerome to Warham and the New Testament to Leo, whose name, he bluntly states, will guarantee the work a wider acceptance. However, Erasmus manages to associate Warham with the dedication in a graceful and diplomatic gesture that won the admiration of Budé (see Ep 403:145–52). Dedications were always a matter of concern for Erasmus; we know from his correspondence that he often discussed the pros and cons of a particular dedication with friends and sought their advice (see, for example, Epp 333:96–106, 334:143–70, 1739:8–19, and 1769:22–6).

This letter (dated 1 February 1516) is printed in Allen and in CWE as Ep 384. Both Allen and CWE offer introductions on the development of Erasmus' New Testament. The reader should know, however, that recent research has made Allen's belief in an early version of Erasmus' Latin translation, done in England in 1505–6, no longer tenable (see A.J. Brown 'The date of Erasmus' Latin translation of the New Testament' *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 8 (1984) 351–80; and H.J. de Jonge 'Wann ist Erasmus' Übersetzung des neuen Testaments entstanden?' in *Erasmus of Rotterdam* ed J. Sperna Wieland and W.Th.M. Frijhoff (Leiden 1988) 151–7).

The translation that follows is that of Sir Roger Mynors in CWE 3 221–4 with a few minor adjustments.

TO LEO THE TENTH, PONTIFF SUPREME IN EVERY WAY,
FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, LEAST OF THEOLOGIANS, GREETING

Many and great were the distinctions, most holy father, which made you universally renowned and respected before you ascended the pontifical throne as his Holiness Pope Leo the Tenth: on the one hand, the uncounted glories of the house of the Medici,[1] no less celebrated for the legacy of its eminent scholars than for the glorious line of your ancestors; on the other, the innumerable gifts of body and mind of which some were lavished on you by the bounty of heaven and some achieved under heaven's encouragement by your own efforts. Yet nothing distinguished you more truly or more amply than the fact that you brought to an office, which is the greatest that can fall to a mortal among mortal men, not only an equally great integrity of character – a life far, far removed from everything discreditable – but you[2] have also brought to the sublime office of the papacy a reputation unsullied by any taint of evil gossip. Hard enough anywhere, this is particularly hard to

* * * * *

1 Leo was the second son of Lorenzo de' Medici, 'Lorenzo the Magnificent.'
2 you … papacy] Added in *1535*, presumably to emphasize the balance between the two clauses

achieve in Rome; for in that city the liberty (not to call it licence) of speech is such that integrity itself is not safe from slander, and even those men who are entirely free from faults are not free from aspersions. We can truly say that to have deserved the papal dignity brought Leo far more true glory than to have received it.

And now, in the exercise of this splendid and most holy office, you in turn enhance the eminence conferred upon you by many glorious acts and many outstanding virtues; but nothing more effectively commends you alike to heaven and to mortal men than the great zeal and wisdom with which you take as your particular aim the daily advancement of the Christian life, which through the fault of the times and especially the wars has hitherto been undermined and shown signs of collapse.[3] Like all else in human affairs, it naturally sinks back by degrees into something worse and seems to degenerate, unless we fight against this with all our might.[4] But to restore great things is sometimes a harder but a nobler task than to have introduced them. And so, since you appear to us as a second Esdras,[5] doing all you can to pacify the storms of war[6] and vigorously pursuing your chosen purpose to rebuild religion, it is right that Christians of all lands and all peoples should support, each of them to the best of his power, one who follows this most noble and most profitable aim. Already I see men of outstanding gifts, like great and wealthy kings, sending our Solomon marble, ivory, gold, and precious

* * * * *

3 Cf *Querala pacis* (1517) CWE 27 305 n98, where the wars of the 'past ten years' are explained as the wars fought against Venice, then against France, and the efforts of Julius II to recover the papal states.

4 The sentiment and to some extent the wording reflect the pessimistic lines in Virgil *Georgics* 1.197–200.

5 Esdras (or Ezra) was the priest and scribe involved in the rebuilding of the temple after the Babylonian exile; cf Ezra 2–7. In this whole passage there is an unmistakable reference to the contemporary rebuilding of St Peter's. But Erasmus is more concerned with the rebuilding of the church. The imagery seems in part to derive from Ezra 2:68–9 on providing for the rebuilding of the temple: 'And some of the chief of the fathers ... offered freely for the house of God to set it up in his place. They gave after their ability unto the treasure of the work threescore and one thousand drams of gold ...' (AV).

6 After the military campaigns of Pope Julius II, Leo X instituted a policy of peace. Shortly after his accession, the Holy See was reconciled with Louis XII of France, an event which won Erasmus' enthusiastic support; cf Ep 335:113–36.

stones for the building of the temple.[7] We petty chieftains, and indeed we ordinary mortals, rather than contribute nothing, gladly bring what we can, timber perhaps or at any rate goatskins;[8] what I am offering is a small thing, to be sure, if measured by what I have accomplished, but (unless I am all astray) likely to be of not a little use, though not much beauty, in the temple of Christ, especially if it win the approval of him whose yea or nay alone governs the whole sum of human things.

One thing I found crystal clear: our chiefest hope for the restoration and rebuilding of the Christian religion, our sheet anchor as they call it,[9] is that all those who profess the Christian philosophy the whole world over should above all absorb the principles laid down by their Founder from the writings of the evangelists and the apostles, in which that heavenly Word,[10] which once came down to us from the heart of the Father, still lives and breathes for us, and acts and speaks with more immediate efficacy, in my opinion, than in any other way. Besides which, I perceived that the teaching that is our salvation was to be had in a much purer and more lively form if

* * * * *

7 Erasmus in a letter to Leo of May 1515 had already found a resemblance between the pope and 'Solomon the peacemaker' (Ep 335:132). Here the reference is to Solomon as the builder of the first temple; it seems from 1 Kings 6–10, however, that the gifts of great and wealthy kings for the building of the temple were in reality levies imposed on client rulers by Solomon.

8 A gift of timber (*materiae*) would obviously be useful in the building of a temple, but what about 'goatskins'? This may simply be a variant of the adage *De lana caprina* 'About goat's wool,' symbolizing an object of small value; cf *Adagia* I iii 53. But we may see a clue to a more pointed meaning in Exodus 26, describing the making of the tabernacle; see Exod 26:7 for the reference to 'goats' hair' used for the 'curtains' of the tabernacle; and for the Latin see 1 Sam 19:13 *pellem pilosam caprarum*. In fact, Erasmus appears to have followed Jerome, who had developed the metaphor in the *Prologus* to the book of Kings to express an evaluation of his biblical enterprise by using the image of goatskins: *pelles et caprarum pilos* (Weber 365); cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 42 with n189.

9 *Adagia* I i 24

10 Word] *verbum* in the first edition, as in VG. But when this letter was reproduced in subsequent editions of Erasmus' New Testament, *verbum* was altered to *sermo* to agree with the change introduced in *1519* into the translation of John 1:1. This departure from the reading of the Vulgate was bitterly opposed, and Erasmus felt called upon to defend himself in his *Apologia de 'In principio erat sermo'* CWE 73 3–40. Cf C.A.L. Jarrott 'Erasmus' *In principio erat sermo*: A Controversial Translation' *Studies in Philology* 61/1 (1964) 35–40; and M. O'Rourke Boyle *Erasmus on Language and Method in Theology* Erasmus Studies 2 (Toronto 1977) 3–31. Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 207 with n804 and the reference there to n749.

sought at the fountainhead and drawn from the actual sources than from pools and runnels. And so I have revised the whole New Testament (as they call it) against the standard of the Greek original, not unadvisedly or with little effort, but calling in the assistance of a number of manuscripts in both languages – and not just any sort of manuscript, but those that are both very old and very correct.[11] And well knowing that sacred subjects also demand scrupulous treatment, I was not content with that degree of care but passed rapidly over all the works of the classical theologians, and ran to earth from their quotations or their comments what each of them had found or altered in his text. I have added annotations of my own, in order in the first place to show the reader what changes I have made, and why; second, to disentangle and explain anything that may be complicated, ambiguous, or obscure; and lastly, as a protection, that it might be less easy in the future to corrupt what I have restored at the cost of scarcely credible exertions.

And yet, to speak frankly, this whole undertaking might be thought too lowly to be offered to one than whom the world can show nothing greater, were it not fitting that whatever contributes to the restoration of religion should be consecrated to the supreme head of our religion who is its champion. Nor am I afraid that you may reject this gift of mine, such as it is, for it is not in your high office alone that you represent him whose custom it is to value gifts by the intentions of the giver, who preferred the poor widow's two mites to the rich and splendid offerings of the wealthy.[12] Do we not see every day, hung up in honour of the saints among the offerings of kings gleaming with gold and jewels, garlands of meadow flowers or garden greenery offered by humble folk who are poor in this world's goods but rich in piety?

Besides, whatever be the produce great or small, serious or trivial, of this small holding of my mind, it can be claimed entire with perfect right, even if I do not so dedicate it, by the supreme patron and champion of the virtues and of literature among his own people, William Warham,[13] archbishop of Canterbury, true primate of all England in merit as well as in title and *legatus natus*,[14] as they call it, of your Holiness; to him I owe all that I am

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11 For the manuscripts used by Erasmus see 'Title Page of the *Novum instrumentum* 1516' 743 n2.

12 Cf Mark 12:42; Luke 21:1–4.

13 Warham] Added in *1522*

14 The *legatus natus* was one of three kinds of papal legate (the other two were known as 'legates *a latere*' and 'nuncios'). The *legatus natus* was a legate ex officio by virtue of holding a certain office. Until the Reformation, the archbishop of Canterbury was *legatus natus*.

and not merely the entire produce of my labours. For, to say nothing for the moment about what he has meant to me in public and in private, he does for his native England what Leo does for the whole world and what the house of the Medici has so long been doing for Italy (making it, even if for no other reason, the most fortunate country of them all). For his fellow Englishmen William is like a favourable star, a gift given by fate itself, so that under his leadership all that is good may germinate afresh and grow. It is just as if several men were united in one body and more than one divine spirit dwelt in that single heart, for, in a wonderful way, he is archbishop to the church, legate to the Roman see, privy councillor to the court, chancellor to the courts of justice,[15] and Maecenas[16] to the humanities. It is his doing more than any man's that an island, long renowned for its men, its arms, and its riches, now shows such a high standard also in laws, religion, and public morality, and even in gifted minds cultivated in every branch of letters that it can contend on equal terms with any other region of the world.

But to secure for this labour of mine a wider sphere of usefulness, I have decided to borrow your name, as one that all men venerate, to bait the hook, as it were, for the general advantage of the world, especially as this course is suggested by the nature of the case; for it was exquisitely appropriate that this Christian philosophy should be channelled to every mortal under the auspices of him who holds the citadel of the Christian religion, and that the heavenly teaching should set out on its mission to the human race through him, through whom it was Christ's will that we should receive all that raises man from earth to heaven. Although, for that matter, why should not this book go forth into men's hands supported by a double commendation, that is, with even better prospect of success, by being dedicated in common to the whole world's two greatest men, just as we see altars and churches gain in sanctity and grandeur when they are dedicated to more than one saint? It does not matter how novel this may seem, provided that it is for the public good. And Leo is so modest, so approachable, that this quality contributes to his greatness no less than that eminence in which he far surpasses all other great men. Moreover, the archbishop is so outstanding in every kind of merit

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15 Warham was councillor both to Henry VII and to Henry VIII; he was lord chancellor from 1504 to 1515.

16 Maecenas, the name of the famous patron of Virgil and Horace, has become a synonym for a 'patron of the arts and of learning.' Erasmus included an extravagant laudation of Warham in the *1516* annotation on 1 Thess 2:7 (*sed facti sumus parvuli*); cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 76 with n309.

that, if Leo with his all-round supremacy is to have a colleague, one could not find a more suitable one.

And one last word: if it is proper before so great a prince to show a touch of Thraso[17] in the comedy, this work of mine may look at first sight as humble as you please, but I am confident that the attentive reader will find much more within than my work displays on the surface.

Your Highness, however, must be continually attentive to the welfare of the whole world, and if I take up more of your time by writing at greater length, I shall do the public a disservice; so I must from this point forward do business with the common reader. First let me say a prayer: may he whose providence gave us our tenth Leo, that the world might become a better place, be pleased to grant him a long life, crowned with success.

Basel, 1 February in the year of our salvation 1516

**Letter of Pope Leo X to Erasmus, 1519**

After the publication of the first edition of his New Testament and its dedication to Leo X, Erasmus tried through his friends to obtain some formal expression of papal approval for his work. This letter (Ep 864) was the result (for Erasmus' efforts to obtain the papal letter see 'New Testament Scholarship' 113–14 with n492). Erasmus attached great importance to it, and it was printed prominently in the four succeeding editions of the work from the Froben Press, beginning in 1519. The translation is by Sir Roger Mynors.

TO OUR BELOVED SON ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM,
DOCTOR OF DIVINITY, FROM POPE LEO X

Our beloved son, greeting and apostolic benediction. We derived great pleasure from the studies on the New Testament that you published some time ago, not so much because they were dedicated to us as for the new and exceptional learning by which they were distinguished and which earned them a chorus of praise from the world of scholars. The news that you had lately revised them, and enriched and clarified them by the addition of numerous annotations, gave us no little satisfaction; for we inferred from the first edition, which used to seem a most finished performance, what this new one would be and how much it would benefit all who have at heart the progress of theology and of our orthodox faith. Go forward then in this same spirit:

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17 Thraso, a character in Terence's *Eunuchus*, stands as the type of the boastful man.

work for the public good, and do all you can to bring so religious an undertaking into the light of day, for you will receive from God himself a worthy reward for all your labours, from us the commendation you deserve, and from all Christ's faithful people lasting renown.

Given at Rome at St Peter's under the ring of the Fisherman, on the tenth day of September 1518, being the sixth year of our pontificate.

Evangelista[1]

**Letter of Johannes Oecolampadius, 1516**

Oecolampadius (1482–1531) worked as a corrector for Froben from 1515 to 1516 during the period when the *Novum instrumentum* was being prepared for the press. Erasmus was enthusiastic about his work, although later he expressed reservations and blamed some of the problems of the first edition on the lack of experience of the two proofreaders, Oecolampadius and Nikolaus Gerbel (Ep 421:58–62). What made Oecolampadius particularly valuable to Erasmus was his knowledge of Hebrew, which he had studied in Tübingen and Stuttgart (1513–15). Erasmus hoped to retain his services for the revised edition of 1519, but although Oecolampadius was in Basel for several months in 1518 when the revised *Annotations* were being prepared for the press, he was unavailable to help.

This letter was printed at the end of the annotations of *1516*; it was reprinted after the subject index in the edition of 1519 but dropped thereafter. Relations between Erasmus and Oecolampadius became strained, as the latter established himself as one of the leaders of the Reformation. Not only did the two men disagree in theology, but Erasmus began to be critical of Oecolampadius' linguistic abilities (see Epp 1817:45–54, 1835:12–14, 2052:2–4 with n1 and Ep 2263:43–53). Some others spoke more severely than Erasmus of Oecolampadius as a translator (see, for example, Epp 2016:95–102 and 2239:51–6). However, just before the Reformer died, he and Erasmus collaborated once more, when Oecolampadius contributed translations to the great edition of Chrysostom published by the Froben Press (see 'New Testament Scholarship' 327 with n1393).

In this flattering letter about Erasmus Oecolampadius pulls out all the stops. The strained puns, the oblique references, and the extended metaphor

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1 The scribe is Evangelista Tarasconio of Parma, papal secretary under Leo X and Clement VII (Ep 864:19n). His name appears in papal registers 1518–29; cf Allen Ep 864:17n.

describing the *Annotations* as a 'light luncheon' cause some discomfort to the translator. But the letter stands as a fine example of the encomiastic style.

JOHANNES OECOLAMPADIUS TO THE GENTLE READER, GREETING

Although our Erasmus, who brings grace and glory to every kind of scholarly pursuit, has written somewhere in his preface, with that remarkable modesty of his, that in the present volume you will find nothing but minutiae, a sort of light luncheon,[1] yet he has treated these minutiae so gracefully, polished them so happily, created such a sumptuous banquet out of his 'light luncheon,' prepared it so elegantly, and brought it to the table with such a merry and friendly countenance[2] that everyone whose stomach is not desperately weak or utterly ruined must leave this luncheon stuffed with learning and piety – if, that is, anyone could bear to leave it and would not, like the Lotus-eaters,[3] refuse to be separated from the table; for we know that all the best scholars (and, I might add, all the best men) are enthusiastic about the Erasmian cuisine – whether enticed by its attractive elegance or captivated by the magnificence of the food, I do not know. It does not matter whether you want a literary feast with sumptuous fare or a banquet set out in dazzling splendour; Erasmus has both kinds[4] readily available. These qualities are characteristic of all his work but are especially evident and abundant here. I do not doubt, good reader, that you have already noticed this for yourself: all you need to do is to observe how he has piled up the table with a splendid feast of gospel teaching along with the fine sauces and side dishes of his erudite annotations. (For surely no one would jibe at calling the

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1 Oecolampadius is referring to Erasmus' prefatory letter with which he introduced his *Annotations* to the New Testament, and which was reprinted in later editions with minor alterations to take account of additional manuscript evidence. See the preface to the *Annotations*, Ep 373, especially 373:8 'light luncheon' and 373:84 'minutiae' ('Prefaces and Letters' 782 and 785–6). Oecolampadius develops Erasmus' image of a light meal and exploits it throughout the piece.

2 'Friendly countenance': *bonis vultibus*; cf Ovid *Metamorphoses* 8.677–8, where Ovid describes the hospitality offered to the gods by Baucis and Philemon: 'On top of all this there were friendly faces and lively and generous good will.' There is a further verbal imitation of the same passage later in this letter; cf n10 below.

3 In Homer the Lotus-eaters give Odysseus' men the lotus fruit, which makes them unwilling to return to their companions; *Odyssey* 9.82–104.

4 'Both kinds' seems to refer to two kinds of excellence in Erasmus: excellence of content and excellence of style. The distinction is maintained throughout the letter.

philosophy of the gospel 'bread,' when it was so named by Christ himself.)[5] But if you pay attention also to the elegance of the work, you will not just realize its quality but will be astounded, for nothing there is ordinary or stale. Everything is filled with such captivating freshness, everything gleams with such splendour, everything has such striking grandeur that you might imagine it had recently been brought out from the heavenly larder exactly as it was given to us long ago by the apostles. In this achievement he takes second place to none of the famous interpreters who sit at the head of the table, but leaves most of them far behind; much less is he to be compared with men of ordinary talents. This, gentle reader, you will experience for yourself with, as they say, bulging cheeks.[6] When this past winter I was about to have some free time at Basel for the study of theology, I had the good luck to form the happiest of associations with the great Erasmus, and I can attest to the almost incredible and indefatigable energy of the man in promoting the faith; so just as he recalls the phoenix bird by his exceptional erudition, so he wins the phoenix tree, that is the palm of victory, for the matchless vigour of his mind.[7] It was a miraculous spectacle, or rather a spectacular miracle, to see him dictating and revising as much as three presses could cope with, while at the same time consulting Greek and Latin manuscripts, all very old and differing from one another, comparing the Greek and Latin commentators, both the ancient and the relatively recent, and evaluating writers of the highest and the lowest rank. As a result, not only does he explain the general sense, with which many distinguished commentators are content (for the common run of interpreters scarcely provide salt for their unsalted bread),[8] but he has never skipped over the tiniest word or article or stroke of the pen. Such conscientiousness would put us heavily in his debt, even if the meal he served up was of the thinnest and most meagre sort. How great, then, is our debt when he sets before us such a magnificent feast, especially perhaps because,

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5 Cf John 6:35, 48–51.

6 'With bulging cheeks': *plenis buccis*. This proverbial expression generally refers to pride or anger (cf *Adagia* I viii 49 and III v 71), but here the meaning seems to have been adapted to the persistent image of the annotations as a feast.

7 Oecolampadius plays on two meanings of the verb *refero* 'to call to mind,' 'to win [a prize],' and two associations of the name 'phoenix.' As the fabled bird that was unlike any other, it symbolized the unique; but the Latin word also carries the meaning 'palm tree,' symbolizing victory.

8 According to *Adagia* IV v 87, 'to eat salt and cheese' is to eat the simplest possible meal, ie one composed of bread, salt, and cheese. The interpreters of Scripture, mentioned here, hardly provide the minimum nourishment.

on top of everything, this royal and Saliaric[9] banquet is served without affected airs but, as the poet says,[10] with friendly countenance, or rather in the most hospitable manner one could imagine! Every detail is presented with smiling face, outstretched hands,[11] and the most ready attentiveness to our needs. He omits nothing that is to the point or makes for elegance. He is never niggardly like the miser, never grudging like the envious man, never slow like the laggard; nothing is thrust at you with the proud man's haughty airs. His sole concern is kindness, good will, generosity. This explains that unique and wonderful modesty that makes him put no value on himself and always belittle his own work. When he produces something of the highest quality, he calls it minutiae;[12] when he fulfils every obligation, he says it is nothing; and since there is nothing more alien to his character than to parade in alien plumage, he even assigns to others part of the praise that is his due. Here is a characteristic example: when I was engaged by Froben, the most conscientious of printers, as a subordinate – though not entirely useless – functionary in charge of checking the formes,[13] he even saw fit to call me his Theseus,[14] although my services in other respects were not in the least necessary to so great a hero, nor was I of much use. Yet I willingly took on this somewhat boring and time-consuming task and readily whittled away at it so as not to fail such a pious enterprise in so far as lay within my powers. In fact, I followed the example of Erasmus himself, who, putting everything else aside, devoted a good part of his time to this undertaking. Night and day he toils with extraordinary devotion so that our age may shine with equal brilliance in both sacred and humane letters, in both of which he himself is the high priest, a man whose supremacy is matched only by his generosity. So what remains for us to do, dear reader, except to avoid running on the rocks of ingratitude and profaning the most sacred law of hospitality. We should vie

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9 The Salii were Roman priests of Mars noted for their vigorous dancing and lavish feasting; cf *Adagia* IV ix 81.

10 Again an echo of Ovid *Metamorphoses* 8.677–8 (n2 above)

11 Cf *Adagia* II ix 54; 'outstretched hands' are a gesture of welcome.

12 There is something amiss in the Latin text here, which was not corrected when the letter was reprinted in 1519; with the present reading the subjunctive *vocet* cannot be explained. Perhaps the sentence should begin with *ut*, not *et*: 'so that when he produces ..., he calls it ...'

13 See Erasmus' account of this in Ep 421:55–65. 'Formes' or 'forms' is a printer's term for a block of type enclosed in a chase and ready for printing.

14 See the preface to the *Annotations* in 'Prefaces and Letters' 785 with n11 and Epp 373:76n and 334:135n. For Theseus as the proverbial helper see *Adagia* I v 27.

in honouring this genuine theologian with the genuine respect in which the Apostle wishes the elders to be held[15] and show our undying love for this all-lovable[16] Erasmus, and above all seek the fruit that he fervently and piously expects from us, that is, that we embrace in thought and action the saving precepts he has taught us. Farewell.

**Letter of Johann Froben to the Reader, 1519**

Erasmus was clearly disappointed by the inadequacies, both of content and production, that he noticed in the first edition of his New Testament. Just as he claims on the title page of the second edition that the work has been carefully revised, that the text is based on a larger number of manuscripts, and that the annotations have been greatly enlarged, so at the end of the work Froben takes credit for a more elegant and accurate printing. This letter to the reader was placed immediately after the biblical text (*Novum Testamentum* [1519] I 566) and before a list of errata and the concluding press signature and date of publication (March 1519). The letter contains a handsome tribute to Bruno and Basilius Amerbach and to Jacobus Nepos, who helped with the editing of the work; Oecolampadius, who made an important contribution to the first edition, was no longer available, although Erasmus had hoped for his help (see Ep 797).

JOHANN FROBEN TO THE READER, GREETING

Just as this new edition has been revised much more carefully and enriched with additional material by that great Camillus[1] of letters, both sacred and profane, Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, who is godfather to my son,[2] thus providing for all good, and especially all Christian, men, as well as for all generations to come the sort of benefit that Camillus once brought to the Romans of his time, so I too have taken pains that this volume should see the light of day in a more accurate and elegant state and that, so far as lies within

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15 'Apostle,' ie Paul; cf 1 Tim 5:17; and 1 Thess 5:12-13.

16 A pun on Erasmus' name: the word is Greek *πανεράσμιος* 'all-lovable.'

1 Camillus (fl 390 BC), whose legend grew with time, is here cited as the type of the great benefactor of his people. According to tradition, he was appointed 'dictator' five times and won four triumphs. His military and legislative record earned him the title of the 'second father and founder of Rome,' Livy 5.19–7.1; Plutarch *Camillus* 1.1.

2 Erasmus was godfather, along with Beatus Rhenanus, to Froben's youngest son, Johannes Erasmus (1515–49), 'generally called Erasmius,' CEBR II 57.

my power, it should far surpass its predecessor.[3] But Erasmus, and Erasmus alone, had to undertake the essential labour of examining the texts of the old interpreters,[4] collating the Greek sources,[5] expanding the annotations, altering some and adding many more, considering each person's opinion and why one differs from the rest, pausing at almost every syllable and hesitating over the smallest detail. Labour of this sort involves such hard and tedious work that there is no spirit, however strong, that it will not break, none so energetic that it will not weary, no mind so sharp that it will not blunt. It takes an exceptional and, I might say, an inspired mind to hold a steady course, despite being pulled in so many directions, and to do full justice to every question as though it were the only matter worth attention. And yet do we still deny Erasmus the highest praise for the heavenly labours of his heavenly mind, while continuing to admire Hercules for winning a place in heaven by battling with monsters, using the power of his arms and his physical strength?[6] I was more fortunate, for I was able to share my work with others. The two Amerbachs, Bruno and Basilius,[7] men of great learning and good friends of mine, were a real help to me – no new thing for them. Furthermore, Jacobus Nepos,[8] a man of no mean competence in both languages, showed commendable scrupulousness in his work as a corrector. Far from begrudging these assistants of mine the glory they deserve for their labours, I openly confess that I owe everything to them. I dislike the vanity of

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3 For the glaring faults in the production of the edition of 1516 cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 56–7 with n240.

4 References to the Fathers increased steadily over the five editions, the most notable increase being in the second edition. Erika Rummel, basing her sample on the four Gospels, estimates that quotations from the Fathers doubled in 1519; Rummel *Erasmus' Annotations* 69. Cf also 'New Testament Scholarship' 131–3.

5 Erasmus claims that he used five Greek manuscripts for *1519*, presumably five in addition to those available for the first edition; cf *Apologia* 461 with n31; also 'New Testament Scholarship' 43 with n192 and 122 with n531.

6 The comparison of Erasmus to Hercules is frequently made by his admirers – and sometimes hinted at by himself; see Lisa Jardine *Erasmus Man of Letters* (Princeton 1993) 41–8, 72–3.

7 Bruno and Basilius Amerbach were the two eldest sons of the famous printer Johann Amerbach. They continued to work as scholar-editors after the death of their father in 1513, when the press came under the direction of Johann Froben. Bruno died of the plague later in the year in which the second edition of the New Testament appeared; cf CEBR I 42, 46–7.

8 Nepos was one of Erasmus' most trusted servants and associates, who worked briefly with the Froben Press on the 1519 edition; cf CEBR III 11–12.

those who claim for themselves an adulation that was gained by the labours of others. I too have contributed what belongs to my province. I ask you, the reader, to be grateful both to the author and to us. Farewell, and remember that while other books may furnish you with wit or eloquence or provide you with information about various subjects, this work alone can bring you the fullness of bliss.
At Basel, 5 February in the year 1519

**Letter of Erasmus to the Pious Reader, 1527**

This letter is the preface to fifty-six pages of supplementary notes dealing mainly with errors in the Vulgate, but including an *index rerum et verborum* to the *Annotations* and a final version of the selective lists of various kinds of errors in the Vulgate. In *1519* and *1522* these 'lists of errors' (called 'indexes') had been placed among the prefaces of the New Testament (see 'New Testament Scholarship' 119 with n516 and 293 with n1245). Since this material (placed at the end of the second volume) was printed as a supplement to the New Testament of *1527* after the colophon had been added, its inclusion can be dated to late in February or the first few days of March 1527 (see Ep 1789 introduction). The point of the letter is to warn readers that quotations from Scripture in Latin translations of the Greek Fathers cannot be used as evidence for the Greek text of the New Testament since they have generally been altered to conform to the Vulgate.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE PIOUS READER, GREETING
When I was working on this fourth edition, there came into my possession some Greek manuscripts of Chrysostom[1] and Athanasius,[2] in which I observe that their citations of Scripture generally agree with my edition. All previous translators of the Greek commentaries have chosen for some reason to give the reading of the Vulgate rather than to translate what was in the Greek

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1 Erasmus sent Hieronymus Froben to Italy in May 1526 in search of a manuscript that he wanted for his work on Chrysostom. He had long been interested in this author and published editions of some of his works in Greek, as well as translated others into Latin. Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 288 with n1219.
2 Athanasius was another of Erasmus' current interests. In March 1527 he published translations of some *Lucubrationes* of Athanasius and dedicated them to John Longlond, bishop of Lincoln, a good friend and patron. In fact, however, in no edition did Erasmus appeal in his annotations explicitly to Athanasius with much frequency; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 291.

manuscripts. As a result, the commentary frequently does not correspond to the text as it has been translated. The problem is particularly evident in the Latin translation of Theophylact's commentaries on the Epistles of Paul.[3] But even greater confusion faces the reader who examines citations or notes in the translations of commentaries on the Old Testament, for discrepancies in the Old Testament are much greater than in the New. It is extremely important, if only to make the Greek commentaries more accessible, to have a Latin translation of both Testaments that is based on the reading of the Greek.

I attempted this in my New Testament, being the first to do so, and met with considerable hostility. His Eminence Francisco, cardinal of Spain,[4] met with more success and less hostility when, with much effort and expense, he performed the same task for both the Old and the New Testaments. I thought I should mention this; it might quieten the barking from certain quarters, which would be a great blessing to Christendom.

**Letter of Erasmus to the Reader, 1535**

This brief note to the reader is printed at the end of the annotations and just before the concluding *Index rerum ac vocabulorum* in the fifth and final edition of Erasmus' New Testament. It refers to the selective indexes of philological problems in the Latinity of the Vulgate. These indexes (cited here as 'Errors in the Vulgate') were included in the editions of 1519, 1522, and 1527; the purpose of this note is to explain to the reader why they are omitted here. In the editions of 1519 and 1522 the indexes were printed among the preliminary material; in 1527 they came after the *Annotations* in the same position as this letter. See the Translator's Note to 'Errors in the Vulgate' 866–9.

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3 Theophylact, Bulgarian patriarch and archbishop of Ochrida (d c 1108), wrote a commentary on the Pauline Epistles, which was traditionally attributed to Athanasius. For the 'Latin translation' and the discovery of Theophylact as the true author see 'New Testament Scholarship' 132 with n554. On the critical principle to which Erasmus points in this letter see 'New Testament Scholarship' 294 with n1249.

4 For Francisco Jiménez (or Ximénes) de Cisneros (1436–1517), archbishop of Toledo, a cardinal, and inquisitor-general of Spain, see *Apologia* n34 and *Contra morosos* paragraph 110b with n298. He was responsible for organizing and supporting the scholars who produced the Complutensian Polyglot Bible, on which see 'New Testament Scholarship' 296 with n1253. Erasmus made significant use of this Bible in preparing the 1527 edition of his New Testament; cf ibidem 311–12 with n1302.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE READER, GREETING

In several previous editions, in order to counter the shameless clamour of my critics, I had appended lists [Latin *elenchos*] indicating inept renderings by the Translator or corruptions introduced by copyists or passages misunderstood by expositors. But at least that snake, who used to be driven into a frenzy by his hatred of everything new, has at last fallen silent, or if he is still making a noise, his hissing is at any rate more muted.[1] There are also those compassionate and oversensitive souls who think it the utmost cruelty, worse than that of a Scythian, for men learned in Latin art (for that is the way these people talk) to malign the Translator in lists and annotations. You would think that we knew for certain who the Translator was,[2] or that the church had only one translator (although the facts show that there were almost as many translators as there were cities, or for that matter writers), or that a man is immediately discredited if, in dealing with Scripture, he admits the existence of a solecism, when such errors are found in the writings of the apostles.[3] So to keep these people quieter from now on, I have omitted those 'uncivilized' lists. Farewell.

## Prefatory Letter to the *Annotations* in the Edition of 1516

The date of composition of this letter is given in the last line as 1515: Allen suggests the month of December of that year. At least in its final form, the letter must precede chronologically the *Apologia* since the last sentence of that work refers to this letter; it would also precede the dedicatory letter to Pope Leo X, which is dated 1 February 1516.

The letter anticipates many of the points raised in the *Apologia* and the prefatory letter to Leo: the importance of the work; the Greek and Latin

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1 For a suggestion about the identity of the 'snake' see Translator's Note to 'Errors in the Vulgate' 867–8 with n5. The image of the hissing serpent appears in *Contra morosos* paragraph 27i, where see n93.

2 That is, the unidentified Translator of the Vulgate New Testament. Erasmus was confident that the Translator was not Jerome, as traditionally believed.

3 Erasmus argued that the apostles spoke a colloquial Greek, contaminated by their native tongue: cf the annotation on Acts 10:38 (*quomodo unxit eum*): 'When the apostles write in Greek, they borrow extensively from the idiom of their own language … for the apostles learned their Greek from the speech of ordinary people and not from the orations of Demosthenes' ASD VI-6 250:666–71. This statement pained Johann Maier of Eck; see Ep 844:63–108 for Erasmus' response to Eck.

manuscript sources; the value of the church Fathers for the recovery of the true text; the opposition that an innovative work of this kind is likely to stir up; the need to bring greater clarity to the text; and the difference between mere annotations and a full commentary. On this last point, although here and in the letter to Leo Erasmus appears to be making only modest claims for his work, he nevertheless insists on the fundamental importance of getting the text right before any attempt is made to build a broader theological argument upon it.

The letter was printed in all five editions of the New Testament, though with considerable additions to take account of new manuscripts that became available and of further study of the Fathers. The text translated here is that which was printed in the 1516 edition. Variants in other editions are given in the notes, but only where there is a change of meaning or where new material has been added; editorial corrections of earlier printing errors are not recorded. The variants noted are summarized and annotated following this letter of *1516*; cf 792–3. For a more comprehensive apparatus see Allen Ep 373.

The translation is that of Sir Roger Mynors, which is based on Allen's eclectic text. A few changes have been made, principally to conform to the readings of the 1516 edition. The notes borrow liberally from the commentary of J.K. McConica, with some additions designed particularly to suit the interests of readers of the present volume.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE PIOUS READER, GREETING

Although I did so to the best of my ability at the very outset of this work,[1] yet it may be worthwhile to warn the reader briefly once again both what he ought to expect from these brief notes and what demands I can reasonably make upon him in return. In the first place, what I have written are short annotations, not a commentary, and they are concerned solely with the integrity of the text; so let no one, like a selfish guest, demand supper instead of a light luncheon and expect me to give him something different from what I undertook to produce. This for the moment is the play I undertook to perform; and thus, just as I have to keep to my programme, so it is reasonable

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1 Ie, in the preliminary *Apologia*, or more probably in the prefatory letter to Leo X, which deals more particularly with the limited scope of the *Annotations*; both the *Apologia* and the letter to Leo were placed at the beginning of the edition, ie at the 'outset of this work.' In the single volume of 1516 this preface appeared midway through the volume, before the annotations.

that the courteous and fair-minded reader, like a friendly spectator, should do his best for the actors and attune himself to the scene before him.

I have taken what they call the New Testament and revised it, with all the diligence I could muster and all the conscientiousness that such a work demands, checking it in the first instance against the true Greek text. For that is, as it were, the fountainhead to which we are not only encouraged to have recourse in any difficulty by the example of eminent divines, but also[2] so instructed by the actual decrees of the Roman pontiffs.[3] Second, I checked it against[4] very early copies of the Latin version,[5] two of which were made available by that distinguished master of the divine philosophy John Colet, dean of St Paul's in London; these were written in such an ancient style of writing that I had to learn from the beginning how to read them and to study my letters like a schoolboy.[6] Finally, I have checked the text against quotations or corrections or explanations of authors who are fully and universally

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2 The text as printed in *1516*. In *1519* a clause was added, and the text read, '... encouraged ... by the example of eminent divines, but frequently advised to do so by Jerome and Augustine, and so instructed by the actual decrees ...' Cf Jerome Ep 71.5.3; also Jerome's letter to Desiderius, which forms the preface to his translation of the Pentateuch. With regard to Augustine, Erasmus may have had in mind a passage such as Ep 118.10, where Augustine argues that Greek philosophy is best read in the original and not in Latin paraphrases.

3 The reference is possibly to Gratian *Decretum* pars 1 dist 9 cap 3–6 in the *Corpus iuris canonici* and perhaps also to Jerome's preface, addressed to Pope Damasus 1, in his edition of the Gospels; cf *Apologia* n28 and Ep 843 n109; and for Jerome see Weber 1515.

4 against … copies] *fidem* 'the evidence of' added in *1535* to read, 'against the evidence of very early copies' (thus completing the syntax).

5 For the Latin manuscripts available to Erasmus for the various editions of the New Testament see 'Title Page of the *Novum instrumentum* 1516' 743 with n2.

6 schoolboy.] From *1522*, 'schoolboy. A third was provided by the illustrious lady Margaret, aunt of the emperor Charles; its evidence I have frequently cited in this third edition under the name of the Golden Codex, because it is entirely clad in gold and finely written in gold letters. After that, I was provided with several manuscripts of remarkable antiquity by the equally ancient and celebrated collegiate church of St Donatian at Bruges. Previously, the house of Corsendonck had supplied me with a manuscript very neatly corrected, not to mention some lent me by those excellent scholars, the brothers Amerbach. It is not, therefore, that I have made a number of corrections dreamed up out of my own head; I have followed the manuscripts listed, and others like them, which it is not so important to name.' For notes to this 1522 addition see 'Changes in the Edition of 1522' 792–3.

approved – Origen, Chrysostom, Cyril, Jerome, Ambrose, Hilary, Augustine[7] – whose evidence I have adduced on many passages with this in mind, that when the intelligent reader has perceived that in certain definite places my corrections and their opinion coincide, he may give me his confidence in other places too, in which probably by chance they have neither supplied a note nor supported me.[8]

I know, however, that it is human nature to object to novelty in everything, but especially in the field of learning, and that most people expect to find the old familiar taste and what they call the traditional flavour;[9] and I also reflected how much easier it is, nowadays especially, to corrupt a sound text than to correct a corrupted one. Consequently, after revising the sacred books, I added these pointers (so to call them), partly to explain to the reader's satisfaction why each change was made, or at least to pacify him if he has found something he does not like, for men's temperaments and judgments vary; partly in hopes of preserving my work intact, that it may not be so easy in the future for anyone to spoil a second time what had once been restored with such great exertions. First, then, if I found anything damaged by the carelessness or ignorance of scribes or by the injuries of time, I restored the true reading, not haphazardly but after pursuing every available scent. If anything struck me as obscurely expressed, I threw light on it; if as ambiguous or complicated, I explained it; if differences between the copies or alternative punctuations or simply the ambiguities of the language gave rise to several meanings, I laid them open in such a way as to show which seemed to me more acceptable, leaving the final decision to the reader. Although I do not willingly disagree with the Translator, whoever he was (for his version is traditional and commonly accepted), yet when the facts proclaim that he nodded or was under a delusion, I did not hesitate to make this also clear to the reader: I have championed the truth but in such a way as to criticize no one.[10] Wherever the idiom of the Greek or its peculiar expression has

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7 Augustine] From *1522*, 'Augustine, Theophylact, Basil, Bede.' For a similar list, with identifications, see *Methodus* 449 with n114.

8 me.] From *1522*, 'me in any other way'

9 Cf *Adagia* II iv 19.

10 no one.] From *1519*, 'no one. Solecisms that were obvious and unnatural I removed, and I followed the rules of correct writing everywhere so far as it was possible to do so, always provided there was no loss of simplicity.' The 1519 edition contained for the first time Erasmus' selective lists of solecisms and the other problems suggested here; cf 'Errors in the Vulgate' 872–944; also for a

something about it that helps towards the underlying meaning, I was always ready to demonstrate this or make it visible.

Finally, I collected and weighed up the Old Testament evidences, not a few of which are cited from the Septuagint version or from the Hebrew original, if that version differs from its Hebrew source; although this I could not do single-handedly 'without my Theseus,'[11] as the Greek proverb puts it, for nothing is further from my character and temperament than, like Aesop's crow,[12] to set myself off with others' plumage. So in this department[13] I secured no little help from a man no less eminent for his knowledge of the three tongues than for his piety, which is as much as to say a true theologian, Johannes Oecolampadius of Weinsberg; for I had not yet made enough progress in Hebrew to take upon myself the authority to decide.[14]

For my part, I was well aware that these minutiae, these thorny details, promised far more work than reputation, and that this sort of labour does not usually earn its author much gratitude, while the reader gets more benefit than entertainment from it. But if I have gladly endured so much tedious labour in consideration of the general good, it is surely only right that the reader too, for his own good, if for no other reason, should digest a certain amount of what may irk him and should contribute for himself and his own advantage the spirit that I have shown in helping others. The points of these minutiae that I treat are very small, I agree, but their nature is such that almost less effort would be needed to deal with those great problems over which our grand theologians, in their lordly manner, make such heavy weather, whose swelling cheeks bulge until they crack with pride; moreover,

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defence of Erasmus' ubiquitous efforts in the first edition to note solecisms see 875–83 and *Contra morosos* paragraphs 6–19, a defence further extended in *1535* with the addition of paragraphs 27i and j.

11 'Without my Theseus' is written in Greek. Theseus, the Athenian hero, was famous for giving help to other heroes; cf 'Letter of Oecolampadius' in 'Prefaces and Letters' 776 with n14.

12 For Aesop's crow (or jackdaw) see *Adagia* III vi 91.

13 department] From *1519*, 'department, when I was first publishing this work.' Oecolampadius helped with the first edition. In March 1518 Erasmus expressed a wish that Oecolampadius could be in Basel to help with the Hebrew in the second edition (cf Ep 797), but this proved impossible.

14 Erasmus took up the study of Hebrew at the same time as Greek but abandoned it because of 'the strangeness of the language and the shortness of life'; cf Ep 181:41–4. His knowledge of the language, however, was probably somewhat greater than he usually admits to; see Benoît Beaulieu *Visage littéraire d'Erasme* (Quebec City 1973) 138–9. Cf *Ratio* 500 with n52.

such is the nature of these minute minutiae that to understand them it is necessary[15] to delve into those major issues also. Minute problems they may be, but because of these minute problems we see even the greatest theologians sometimes make discreditable[16] mistakes and fall into delusions, as I shall indicate[17] in a certain number of places, not for the pleasure of attacking anyone (a disease that ought to be kept poles apart from a Christian's work and indeed from his whole life) but in order to justify my good faith to the reader by a few examples produced without criticizing anyone, so that no one may despise these as worthless trifles; for,[18] as Horace puts it, 'To serious things these trifles lead the way.'[19] Why are we so particular over the serving of our meals, so offended by the smallest details of personal attire, and ready to think nothing in money matters too small to be taken into account, yet in Scripture alone disapprove of thus taking trouble and prefer neglect? And I say nothing for the moment about the majesty of the subject, of which no detail can be so unimportant that a religious man can think it beneath him, so mean that it does not require reverent and devoted treatment. It [20]crawls along the ground,[21] they say; it torments itself over pitiful words and syllables. Why do we regard as beneath our notice a single word uttered by him whom we worship and revere as the Word? All the more so, as he tells us himself that one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away.[22] It is the least part of Scripture, what they call the letter; but this is the foundation on which rests the spiritual meaning. This is only rubble,[23] but rubble that carries the august weight of the whole marvellous edifice.

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15 necessary] From *1519*, 'necessary sometimes'
16 discreditable] 'conspicuous' in *1535*. This was a frequent complaint; cf *Apologia* n91 and the references there to the *Methodus* and *Ratio*.
17 indicate] 'have indicated' in *1535*
18 for] 'for in reality' in *1535*
19 Horace *Ars poetica* 451
20 There is no immediate grammatical referent in the Latin for 'it.' Erasmus can be incredibly careless about defining antecedents; often the meaning has to be inferred from the context. The critics he cites must be referring here to the character of Erasmus' work on the New Testament: Erasmus has reduced theology to a pedestrian study of words and syllables.
21 Cf *Adagia* II x 88. The adage is cited from Horace *Ars poetica* 28, where it refers to literary style, but Erasmus suggests it can also be used of people and actions that are common and mean.
22 Cf Matt 5:18.
23 'Rubble,' ie rubble traditionally used as foundation material for a Roman house

St Jerome calls some eminent Greek authors to account because they despise the historical sense and prefer to indulge in allegory[24] as their fancy leads them, and he deplores his own behaviour in producing with youthful confidence an allegorical interpretation of the prophet Obadiah, of whose history he says he knew nothing.[25] The precious pearl lies hidden in a worthless shell, splendid grain is wrapped in flimsy chaff, within a dry and tiny envelope lurks the astonishing vitality of a seed; even so in words that seem ordinary enough and in syllables and in the very strokes of the letters lie hidden great mysteries of divine wisdom. He who wonders why that divine Spirit chose to conceal his riches in wrappings such as these may wonder equally why the eternal Wisdom assumed the person of a man poor and lowly, despised and rejected. To learn these details St Jerome was not too proud to take lessons from a Jew, lessons at night,[26] and spurned no drudgery. For their sake, St Augustine, when already a bishop and an old man, went back to the Greek studies he had rejected as a boy.[27] For them, Origen, old and grey headed, became a child again and learned the elements of Hebrew,[28] outdoing even Roman Cato.[29] To these details Ambrose alludes with pleasure; Hilary lingers over them. They are often discussed, and inner meanings found in them with pious persistence, by Chrysostom, golden author not in tongue alone. In his footsteps, Cyril unfolds a great mystic meaning in the Greek definite article, in the one poor letter *ὁ*, from which he borrows an invincible weapon to launch against heretics.[30] I say nothing for the moment

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24 Jerome Ep 51.4; cf *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* 5 (on 18:2), where Jerome names Eusebius of Caesarea, who 'whenever the historical sense fails, turns to allegory.'

25 Cf *Prologus* to Jerome *Commentarius in Abdiam prophetam*.

26 Jerome studied with several Jews, but Baranina is the only one named. It was with him that he studied at night; cf Jerome Ep 84.3.

27 Augustine *Confessions* 1.14.23; cf *Methodus* n32.

28 For the extent of Origen's knowledge of Hebrew see Origen *Homilies on Genesis and Exodus* trans Ronald E. Heine FOTC 71 (Washington DC 1982) 11–12; also Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 6.16.1.

29 Cato the Censor is said to have studied Greek as an old man, but it is doubtful if this means what it was often taken to mean, that he began to learn the language at an advanced age; cf Cicero *Academica* 2.5, *De senectute* 3; Nepos *Cato* 3.2; Plutarch *Cato maior* 2.4; and Alan E. Astin *Cato the Censor* (Oxford 1978) 157–68. Cf also *Methodus* n31.

30 Cyril of Alexandria (376–444), not Cyril of Jerusalem, as stated in Ep 373:138n. The reference is to Cyril *Commentarius in Ioannnis evangelium* 1.4 (on 1:1); cf Erasmus' annotation on John 1:1 (*erat verbum*), where, from *1516*, Erasmus

about the fact that, while I deal with these details that are my avowed subject, those wider views are sometimes raised en passant; for[31] just as those who expound the meaning are sometimes obliged to explain the precise wording, so I, whose business it is to explain the wording, am obliged from time to time to open the meaning in its full force. Lastly, I had prepared for this by a more serious enterprise, by starting some time ago my commentaries on St Paul,[32] from which it will perhaps appear whether it was wise judgment or mere chance that made me descend to these minutiae.

After all, let any man who so pleases imagine that I was incapable of doing more, and that either the slowness of my wits and the chill in the blood around my heart[33] or lack of knowledge limited me to this humble task: even so a Christian spirit should take in good part the humblest service that is performed in pious devotion. Christ praised the farthing offered[34] by a poor woman, valuing something worthless in itself by the motive of the giver. In some really splendid enterprise the humblest duties have their own distinction. In kings' palaces sweepers and cooks are thought respectable; and in the house of God what service can seem contemptible? I have brought only a load of rubble,[35] but it is for the building of God's temple; others out of their riches will add ivory and gold, marbles and precious stones.[36] I have paved by my own efforts a road that was once beset with rough places and with

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argued that the presence or absence of the article before a word, in particular the word 'God,' had a determining significance for Trinitarian theology, and at the end of the annotation he cited Cyril. Edward Lee attempted to refute Erasmus on this point; cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* (Notes 70, 75, 78) and ibidem 3 (Note 8) CWE 72 172–5, 188–92, and 354–5. I am indebted to Professor Jane E. Phillips for the reference to Cyril's commentary.

31 for] From *1527 etenim* 'for' replacing a redundant *ut* 'as'

32 Cf Ep 164:41–55, 'New Testament Scholarship' 13 with n74, and 26 with n141.

33 Virgil *Georgics* 2.484; the idea that chill blood around the heart signifies dullness comes from Empedocles 31 B.105.3; cf Hermann Diels *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker, Griechisch und Deutsch* 6th ed, rev by Walther Kranz, 3 vols (Berlin 1951) I 350.

34 offered] From *1519*, 'dropped into the treasury.' The story of the widow's mite is told in Mark 12:41–4 and Luke 21:1–4.

35 Cf n23 above.

36 The imagery owes something to the account of the rebuilding of the temple in Ezra 2–7; cf the letter to Leo X in 'Prefaces and Letters' 768 with n5. Cf also 1 Kings 6–10 on the building of Solomon's temple; and Jerome's *Prologus* to the book of Kings, where Jerome contrasts his own offering of 'goatskins' with the gold, silver, precious stones, linen, and silk that some others bring to enhance the beauty of the temple of God (cf 'Letter to Leo' 769 with n8).

bogs – a road on which in the future great theologians can drive with coach and horses. I have levelled the ground of an arena in which they can now display the splendid pageants of their wisdom with less risk of accident. I have hoed up the weeds in a fallow lately blocked with thorns and briars, to make it easier for them to work the fertile soil. By clearing obstacles away, I have opened up a field in which those who wish hereafter to expound the Holy Scriptures can share their sport more readily or meet in conflict with less waste of time. Those who have a feeling for the old theology[37] have a powerful support to help their efforts towards the goal. Again, he who says, with the man in the parable, 'The new wine is better,'[38] and neglects the old through his interest in our more recent vintage of theology – he too has the means of indulging his preference with greater certainty and confidence. And even supposing he gains nothing from this, at least he will lose nothing from his own store if these advantages accrue to those who would rather draw their knowledge of Scripture from the purest springs than from such streams and pools as may be handy, so often poured from one of them into another – not to say fouled by the muddy feet of swine and asses. No: fruit tastes better that you have picked with your own hands from the mother tree; water is fresher that you draw as it bubbles up from the actual spring; wine drinks better that you have drawn off from the cask in which it was first laid down. In the same way, the Scriptures have about them some sort of natural fragrance, they breathe something genuine and peculiarly their own, when read in the language in which they were first written by those, some of whom took them down from those divine and sacred lips, and some bequeathed them to us under the influence of the same Spirit.[39] If Christ's sayings survived in Hebrew,[40] handed down, that is, in the same words in which he first uttered them, who would not love to reflect thoughtfully on them and to weigh up the full force and proper sense of every word and even

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37 Ie the theology of the church Fathers and the prescholastics

38 Luke 5:39, where, however, the man says, 'The old is better.' Erasmus may have inadvertently confused the statement in Luke with the statement of the host at the wedding in Cana, who expressed surprise that the new wine (miraculously made) was better (John 2:10). Jerome had compared his critic to wine tasters in *Prologus* to the Pentateuch, Weber 3.

39 For the imagery of pure spring / muddy pool and the attribution of native grace to the 'original language' see *Methodus* nn23 and 48.

40 Hebrew] In *1535*, 'Hebrew or Syriac.' This correction suggests that the language Christ spoke was not Hebrew but the language of ordinary people, to which Erasmus always refers as 'Syriac.'

every letter? At least we possess the next best thing to this – and we neglect it. If anyone shows us Christ's robe or his footprint, we fall down and worship it. But even if you could produce his every garment and all the furniture of his mother's home, there is nothing that can so exactly represent, so vividly express, so completely show forth Christ as the writings of the evangelists and apostles.[41]

And so, if anyone cannot or will not spend time on these pious pleasures, at least let there be no protests, no interruptions, no ill will aimed at those who follow the better course. Let such men embrace what they love, let them have it and enjoy it: no one is standing in their way. It was not for them that I wrote this. But there will be some at the opposite pole who will think the changes I have made are very modest, who would rather see no agreement with the Vulgate version. But my object was to make the language more correct and lucid, not to polish it; this was no place to look for what is not there, like knots in a rush.[42] What we all ought rather to hope for is that there should be no passage anywhere in Holy Writ that needs this treatment. In the Gospels, where the course of the story in itself is clear and almost self-explanatory, and flows on in a simple unaffected style, it was not really possible for either translator or scribe to do very much damage; although, if one counts them up, there are too many mistakes of this kind in a text where there should have been no doubt at all. But in the apostolic Epistles, where both language and sense are obscure, more changes were needed.[43] All the time I controlled the density of my annotation, so as to be neither tiresomely scrupulous nor to prove inadequate through want of care. And throughout I have indicated the point in as few words as possible instead of explaining it fully, for fear that a business naturally without much charm should be made more tedious by my loquacity.

This is a work of piety, and it is Christian work. And so, my excellent reader, I ask you in your turn to bring pious ears and a Christian heart to your reading of it. Let no man take up these pages in the spirit in which perhaps he opens the *Nights* of Gellius or Angelo Poliziano's *Miscellanies*,[44] to test,

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41 The sentiment expressed here is evident in more extended imagery in the concluding lines of the *Paraclesis*; cf 422.

42 Cf *Adagia* II iv 76. Cf Erasmus' late (1535) confirmatory witness: 'For some subjects refined polish of speech is not suitable,' 'New Testament Scholarship' 388 with n1669; cf also *Apologia* n106.

43 Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 56 with n238.

44 Cf Ep 61:154n; also 'New Testament Scholarship' 51 with n220.

I mean, as though against a kind of touchstone,[45] their intellectual vigour, their eloquence, their recondite learning. The material on which I work is sacred, and it has won its way in the world by simplicity and purity above all. On such material it would be absurd to seek to display human learning and impious to make a show of human eloquence; even if the eloquence were there, it would be proper to conceal it, for fear someone might object that it was perfume on lentils.[46] It is with simple and pure zeal that I lay[47] this before my Christian readers, in hope that hereafter this most sacred philosophy may find more men to follow it and with more enjoyment – in a word, that their labours may be less and their profit more. May Christ himself, who is the witness and support of these efforts of mine, show me little mercy, if this is not the truth: so far am I from seeking any advantage out of these labours that I have knowingly and willingly accepted a great and definite pecuniary loss.[48] As for the sweets of fame, so little am I tempted by them that I would not even have set my name to the work had I not feared that this might reduce its power to do good; for all men suspect a book with no author's name.[49] I am equally ready for both,[50] either to defend myself if what I have

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45 'Against a kind of touchstone,' literally, 'by the Lydian stone'; cf *Adagia* I v 87.

46 Proverbially, 'perfume on nettles' signifies the waste of something precious; cf *Adagia* I vii 23.

47 lay] 'have laid' from *1522*

48 Erasmus gives 'some account' of the costs and rewards of scholarship in the *Catalogus lucubrationum* Ep 1341A:1655–1744; he deals with his expenses in lines 1761–74, stressing the need to keep servants and assistants for collating manuscripts, as well as the costs of travel. He also mentions the high cost of preparing elaborate presentation copies to be sent to dedicatees (lines 1678–83). He might also have included the expense, which must have been considerable, of keeping a library. For lists of books ordered by him at different times see Ep 885 and the autograph fragment printed in Allen VII appendix 20. When negotiations took place in 1525 about the eventual disposal of his library, its value was assessed at the considerable sum of four hundred gold pieces, probably Rhenish gold florins, and the library continued to grow after that; see 'Erasmus' First Will' CWE 12 542 with n20. On Erasmus' earnings from his writing see Jean Hoyoux 'Les moyens d'existence d'Érasme' *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 5 (1944) 7–59.

49 Erasmus was strongly opposed to anonymous and pseudonymous books. In article 1 of his letter of advice to the town council of Basel in 1525 he proposed the banning of all such books and the punishment of those who import, print, or sell them; cf Ep 1539:59–61. If Erasmus was the author of the *Julius exclusus,* this was a breach of his own code; cf CWE 27 156–60.

50 Cf Virgil *Aeneid* 2.61.

said is right or to confess openly my error wherever I can be proved wrong. 'I am a man; I reckon nothing that belongs to a man foreign to me.'[51]

It is in such a spirit that I offer you this, my excellent reader, and in the same spirit you must accept it. This will be to the advantage of us both: you will get more out of the book if you accept what it offers gladly and with an open mind, and I shall have less regret for all my nightly vigils if I know they have been useful to men of good will. If there is anyone so absolute and hard to please, or so bigoted and unfair, that no kind words will move him, this much at least I shall try to win from him – by prayers if need be – that he should allow to sacred studies the same measure of equity as the courts give to those accused of murder and sacrilege: there it is thought disgraceful if sentence precedes evidence, nor is a verdict given before the case has been fully heard. Let him first read it and see what he finds, and then if he pleases, he may damn it and throw it away. It is arrogant to pass judgment on a book you cannot understand; more so, to judge one you have not even opened.

And so farewell, reader, whoever you may be, and let me urgently request you, if you have gained any advantage from my labours, to remember your duty as a Christian and commend me in return in your prayers to Christ, from whom alone I look for a lasting reward from this work.

At Basel, [December] 1515

**Prefatory Letters to the *Annotations*, 1519–35**

The prefatory letter written for the first edition was repeated, with only minor alterations, in all subsequent editions of the *Annotations* published by Froben during Erasmus' lifetime. Since the changes from the first edition are relatively few, there is no need to reproduce the letters here. The main body of the text remains the same, but some additions were necessary because in the meantime Erasmus had been able to consult new manuscripts, both Greek and Latin, and had made further explorations in the biblical scholarship of the Fathers. These changes have been identified in the footnotes to the translation of the first edition (letter immediately preceding) and are therefore listed here for each of the subsequent editions by reference to the footnotes to the translation of the first edition. For a more comprehensive apparatus criticus see Allen Ep 373.

**1/** For changes in the edition of 1519 see nn2, 10, 13, 15, 34.

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51 Terence *Heautontimorumenos* 77

**2/** For changes in the edition of 1522 see nn6, 7, 8, 47. The most important change in this edition is that identified in n6, an addition to the text, reprinted here with notes:

> A third was provided by the illustrious lady Margaret, aunt of the emperor Charles; its evidence I have frequently cited in this third edition under the name of the Golden Codex,[1] because it is entirely clad in gold and finely written in gold letters. After that, I was provided with several manuscripts of remarkable antiquity by the equally ancient and celebrated collegiate church of St Donatian at Bruges.[2] Previously the house of Corsendonck had supplied me with a manuscript very neatly corrected,[3] not to mention some lent me by those excellent scholars, the brothers Amerbach.[4] It is not therefore that I have made a number of corrections dreamed up out of my own head; I have followed the manuscripts listed and others like them, which it is not so important to name.

**3/** For the change in the edition of 1527 see n31.
**4/** For the changes in the edition of 1535 see nn4, 16, 17, 18, 40.

*Dates Appended to the Letters*

The first edition is dated 1515. This date is retained in the second edition although the letter had been revised. The third edition is dated 1521. The two final editions have no date.

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1 The so-called *Codex aureus* was an eleventh-century Latin manuscript of the Gospels, which was lent to Erasmus by Margaret of Austria. Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 203 with n791.
2 Erasmus mentions 'many' manuscripts that he was able to consult in Bruges at the library of the college of St Donatian. He describes two of them in the annotation on Matt 3:16 (*baptizatus autem Iesus*) in *1522*. Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 210 with n810.
3 Erasmus had two manuscripts from the Augustinians at Corsendonck, one Greek and one Latin. It is the Latin version to which he refers here, a ninth- or tenth-century manuscript of the Gospels, which Erasmus consulted for *1519*. The Greek manuscript became a source of severe controversy; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 106–7 with n462, 121–2, and 139–40.
4 On the Amerbach manuscripts see Rummel *Erasmus' Annotations* 39.

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# THE CHIEF POINTS IN THE ARGUMENTS ANSWERING SOME CRABBY AND IGNORANT CRITICS

*Capita argumentorum contra morosos quosdam ac indoctos*

translated by
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Part of the prefatory writings in Erasmus' *Novum Testamentum* are the *Capita argumentorum contra morosos quosdam ac indoctos* 'The Chief Points in the Arguments Answering Some Crabby and Ignorant Critics,' found in all editions except the first (the 1516 *Novum instrumentum*).[1] The text was first composed for the 1519 edition and revised (mainly enlarged) in all subsequent editions, the most important additions being found in the fourth and fifth editions, *1527* and *1535*. The *Contra morosos* belongs to a large corpus of apologetic writings surrounding Erasmus' New Testament project, at the centre of which was his own Latin text of the New Testament.

Erasmus often presented his Latin text as a correction of the Vulgate. As such, it could be seen as a revision of that old translation, intended even to replace it.[2] This impression was sharpened by Erasmus' criticism of the Vulgate, or at least the state in which it was in his day, a criticism that runs through the *Annotations* and is prominent in many of his writings. Moreover, Erasmus' translation, and even more so his *Annotations*, conveyed important messages related to Erasmus' views on Christianity and piety, views that challenged the contemporary practices and modes of life in the church and society. Inevitably, many saw Erasmus' New Testament as a threat to the historic faith. In the face of such criticism, Erasmus was forced to defend himself.

The *Contra morosos* shows intriguing aspects of this lifelong struggle. Across a wide spectrum of his works we can find parallels to its central themes and thoughts. In addition to the question of the merits of the Vulgate, important themes include: translation principles and whether or not a translator is required to be inspired; the importance of philology; Erasmus' qualifications as a critic of the New Testament; the correct manner of expressing criticism. In the later editions of the *Contra morosos*, the value of Greek manuscripts became an important subject as well.

For the second edition of the New Testament, in which the *Contra morosos* first appeared, Erasmus' Latin translation was thoroughly revised.[3] This revision gave the translation a much more radical appearance, and the dif-

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1 In CWE 41 the title is abbreviated as *Contra morosos*.

2 Here Erasmus clearly goes further than Lefèvre, who presented his translation merely as *intelligentia e Graeco* 'understanding based on the Greek.'

3 The old theory, according to which Erasmus had already made a Latin translation in the first decade of the fifteenth century, has been discredited by Andrew Brown; cf 'The Date of Erasmus' Translation of the New Testament' *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 8/4 (1984) 351–80. The essential point made by Brown is that the Meghen manuscripts, which contain ER alongside VG, contain two layers. Comparison of Meghen's handwriting shows that the

ference in character between the translations in the first and the second editions provides an important key to understanding why the *Contra morosos* was written. Erasmus believed it was important to underline the necessity for the radical translation of his second edition and to explain the rationale for it. While his annotations offered occasions to justify and explain the new character of his translation, he was able to do so more directly and insistently by compiling 'lists of deficiencies' in which some obvious and undeniable errors in the Vulgate and blunders made by commentators were cited.[4] The *Contra morosos*, at least in its initial form in the 1519 edition, is best understood as primarily intended to accompany these lists. It justifies the inclusion of the lists and also shares the same combative tone. In writing the *Contra morosos*, Erasmus had a good occasion to reiterate and elaborate certain central points. Besides that, he stresses his own position: he is both excellently qualified for this kind of work and supported by an important network of worldly and clerical authorities. Moreover, he has both Augustine and Jerome on his side. In subsequent editions, the character of the *Contra morosos* changes somewhat, simply because of the changed situation. Erasmus no longer forestalls criticism[5] but lets the text stand as an answer to it, and even enlarges it as a reaction to new points.

We should note here certain aspects of the composition of the *Contra morosos*. The work seems to have been conceived as a string of succinct, short paragraphs, each of these treating a specific criticism. During the composition, however, further elaboration of certain themes proved necessary. One of its notable features is the spiral-like character of its composition. Erasmus regularly reverts to themes that he has already treated, adding fresh elements or expressing a point of view from a different angle.

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Vulgate part was written around 1505, but that ER was added much later (after 1519) and depends upon the translation in Erasmus' *1519* New Testament. The old theory, however, still resurfaces in secondary literature; cf eg Epp 373 and 384 introductions; more recent examples include Brian Cummings *The Literary Culture of the Reformation: Grammar and Grace* (Oxford 2002) 102 n1. Rummel (*Erasmus' Annotations* 20–1) adopts Brown's dating; so also H.J. de Jonge 'Erasmus and the Comma Johanneum' *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 56 (1980) 381–9 (corrected in de Jonge *Castigatio* 97).

4 Andrew Brown speaks of these as 'lists of deficiencies'; cf ASD VI-2 5; in this volume, CWE 41, they are designated as 'Errors in the Vulgate.' They were placed at the end of the *Annotations* in *1527* and were omitted in *1535*; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 293 with n1245 and 295 with n1252. They are presented in their entirety below, 875–944.

5 Cf the chapter title 'Pre-emptive Strikes' in Rummel *Catholic Critics* I 15.

Recent scholarship on the *Contra morosos* is not large. Prior to Schwarz,[6] the *Contra morosos* was almost entirely neglected. Only some occasional references can be found, the most interesting of which is Reuss' nineteenth-century description of the *Contra morosos* as 'the manifesto of science against the bondage of custom.'[7] Holeczek discusses the *Contra morosos* at some length, providing also a basic structure of the text.[8] Most importantly, Erika Rummel, in her many publications on Erasmus' New Testament project, gives the *Contra morosos* the place it deserves as a prime source for understanding the key issues involved.[9]

Like most of Erasmus' prefatory material, the *Contra morosos* was never translated before into English (or any other language, for that matter). This translation is based on the Latin text according to the edition of 1535. Variants from the other three editions in which the *Contra morosos* is printed (*1519*, *1522*, *1527*) are recorded in the notes. In the editions of 1519 and 1522 the paragraphs were numbered, but this numbering was omitted in the editions of 1527 and 1535. For the convenience of the reader and the simplification of reference, the paragraphs in this translation are given their original numbers in square brackets, while paragraphs introduced in later editions are marked with lower case letters.[10] Brief insertions in bold type within square brackets marking the thematic development of the *Contra morosos* have been introduced into the text by the annotator.

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6 Werner Schwarz *Principles and Problems of Biblical Translation: Some Reformation Controversies and Their Background* (Cambridge 1955) 145–60 passim.

7 Eduard Reuss *History of the Sacred Scriptures of the New Testament* trans Edward L. Houghton [from *Die Geschichte der heiligen Schriften Neuen Testaments* 5th ed, Braunschweig 1874] 2 vols (Boston 1984) II 562. In such statements, of course, one easily detects nineteenth-century scholarly projection on sixteenth-century problems.

8 Heinz Holeczek *Humanistische Bibelphilologie als Reformproblem bei Erasmus von Rotterdam, Thomas More und William Tyndale* Studies in the History of Christian Thought 9 (Leiden 1975) 121–3.

9 Notably in 'An Open Letter to Boorish Critics: Erasmus' *Capita argumentorum contra morosos quosdam ac indoctos*' *Journal of Theological Studies* 39 (1988) 438–59, an article entirely dedicated to the *Contra morosos*; cf her *Catholic Critics* I 15–33. Rummel's studies are foundational for the introduction and notes presented here.

10 Important long additions in *1527* will be found in paragraphs 79, 82, and 110; in *1535* in paragraphs 27 and 41. Shorter additions of some importance may be found in *1522* in paragraphs 58 and 70; in *1527* in the introduction and in paragraphs 4, 6, 21, 25, 58, 62, and 110; and in *1535* in paragraphs 38, 73, 98, and 110.

# THE CHIEF POINTS IN THE ARGUMENTS ANSWERING SOME CRABBY AND IGNORANT CRITICS

## [Introduction: Background and Aim of the *Contra morosos*]

CONCERNING THE LAST TWO EDITIONS, THE FOURTH AND THE FIFTH,[1] DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE DEVOUT READER, GREETING

To respond to all the captions of all critics, my very esteemed reader, apart from the fact that it is an endless task, I neither consider to be at all suitable to the dignity of this undertaking nor believe to be worthwhile. And for this reason: those who castigate this enterprise of ours or hold it up to scorn hardly read our apologies in defence of it, or at least they do not understand them. They have already been sufficiently answered in two 'defences' prefixed to the first edition as a shield against their weapons;[2] and also in a letter in which I replied to Maarten van Dorp;[3] moreover,[4] in a letter to the outstanding theologian Henry Bullock;[5] then[6] again in a letter against a certain person whose name I deliberately suppressed;[7] finally, in a defence in which

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1 Concerning … fifth] First in *1535*; in *1519* and *1522*, 'Concerning this second edition'; in *1527*, 'Concerning this last edition'

2 Erasmus refers to the *Apologia* prefacing the text of the New Testament and to the prefatory letter to the *Annotations* of 1516 (letter dated 1515), for which see 'Prefaces and Letters' 781–92.

3 The letter to Dorp (May 1515), Ep 337, answered the criticism of Maarten van Dorp (September 1514), Ep 304, which reflected negative opinion about Erasmus' New Testament project well before the publication of his New Testament in 1516. Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 29–30 with n156.

4 moreover] First in *1527*; previously, 'in addition'

5 Bullock] *Bullocum* first in *1527*; previously, *Bovillum*; for the spelling see CEBR I 220. Erasmus refers to Ep 456 (August 1516); in April 1518 Erasmus would again complain to Bullock about the critics of his New Testament (cf Ep 826).

6 then … some time ago.] Added in *1527*, when, however, the time was designated 'recently,' changed to 'some time ago' in *1535*.

7 Possibly a reference to Ep 843, Erasmus' response to criticism by an unknown writer of a pamphlet; Erasmus does not mention the name of its author. The response, dated 7 May 1518 and written evidently when Erasmus was en route to Basel to attend the printing of the *1519* New Testament, shows considerable overlap with the *Contra morosos*; cf Rummel *Catholic Critics* I 117. The reply to

I replied to Pierre Cousturier some time ago. And[8] also recently in a response to a boastful wrangler I answered the captions of critics. Accordingly, here I note only the chief points in arguments for the benefit of the readers who are either preoccupied or somewhat dull.

**[Preliminary Considerations: Erasmus' Adherence to the Church; the Origin and Nature of the Translation and Annotations, 1–5]**

**[1]** First I testify (and I want this testimony to be pervasive) that I have never intended to depart from the judgment of the Catholic church by so much as a hair's breadth.[9] But if anyone catches anything anywhere of that sort that

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Cousturier, mentioned next, is the *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* published in 1525; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 107 with n464 (anonymous author) and 267, 273–7 (Cousturier).

8 And … critics.] Added in *1535*. The'boastful wrangler' (*rixator gloriosus*) is probably Diego López Zúñiga. As this information was added in *1535*, it must be a reference to the letter to Hubertus Barlandus, the *Epistola apologetica adversus Stunicam*, Ep 2172, published in 1529. This was a (late) response to López Zúñiga's *Assertio ecclesiasticae translationis Novi Testamenti soloecismis quos illi Erasmus Roterodamus impegerat* 'Vindication of the Church's Translation of the New Testament from the Solecisms of which Erasmus of Rotterdam had Accused It' (Rome 1524), in which López Zúñiga had addressed each entry in the list of 'solecisms' as they had appeared in Erasmus' second and third editions; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 331 with n1420. For the list see 'Errors in the Vulgate' 875–83 below and the Translator's Note 873 with n4; cf further Ep 2172 introduction; ASD IX-2 28 with n126.

9 An affirmation repeated frequently throughout Erasmus' work, but nowhere more emphatically than in the *1519* New Testament. In this edition, the title page carried in capital letters the words *salvo ubique et illabefacto ecclesiae iudicio* 'Everywhere preserving secure and unshaken the judgment of the church'; cf 'Title Page of the *Novum Testamentum* 1519' 747. Erasmus echoes the language of the title page at the beginning of the long addition to the annotation on 1 Cor 7:39 (*liberata est a lege, cui autem vult, nubat*): '… always preserving firm and unshaken the judgment of the most holy church' ASD VI-8 146:781. Again in a *1519* addition to the annotation on 1 Cor 11:24 (*hoc est corpus meum*), where he discusses the words of consecration at the Eucharist, he acknowledges that 'in everything assent has to be given to the judgment of the church' ASD VI-8 230:296–8 – a comment that his bitter enemy Vincentius Theoderici was compelled to approve; cf Ep 1126:345–53. He makes the point more than once in the 1520 *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei*; cf eg CWE 72 34, 39. He repeats the affirmation in a *1527* addition to the *Contra morosos*; cf paragraph 110f. However, Erasmus' exemplary submission to the church is conditional: he demands that the church pronounce itself clearly and officially on the points he is expected to accept. Thus at the conclusion of a *1527* addition to the annotation on 1 John

was not, however, deliberate but an oversight on my part (for I am only human), I now in fact wish it to be considered as disavowed.

**[2]** Nor do I pre-empt the judgment of the learned or prejudice the authority of the recognized universities. Everyone is free to make up his own mind.[10] I write annotations, not laws; I propose points to be considered, not immediately to be taken as certain.[11]

**[3]** I have not expended such enormous labour on succeeding editions[12] because I had absolutely[13] no confidence in the previous ones.[14] Rather, I now present many corrections and additions to a work that I then completed as best I could in the allotted time I had. And right there in the first edition I promised that I would in fact do so.[15] And indeed, the more often I do so, the greater gain to the reader.[16]

**[4]** In the first edition I made changes sparingly out of fear that some people would not tolerate very much novelty; afterwards, at the urging and

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5:7–8 (*tres sunt qui testimonium dant in coelo*) he establishes qualifying terms for submission: 'It is my devout disposition to defer always to the judgment of the church, as soon as I hear her clear opinion' ASD VI-10 550:401–2.

10 Cf Erasmus' comment in a letter to Thomas Lupset, written in December 1519 at a crucial point in his controversy with Edward Lee: 'I did not write my annotations on the footing that all other men must be deprived of their right either to add, if someone is able to find fresh material, or to correct, if I have been under a delusion; for I am not only human but a man of most limited gifts and learning scarcely up to the average' Ep 1053:258–62.

11 Erasmus gives here a characteristic definition of the *Annotations*: 'annotations … not laws' (*annotationes … non leges*); cf Ep 373:6: 'short annotations, not a commentary' (*annotatiunculas, non commentarios*). The sentence is echoed in the *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* (1520): 'I call my remarks annotations [*annotationes*] not doctrines [*dogmata*]. And I offer them for discussion, I do not bring them forth as oracles' CWE 72 48; cf CWE 72 33. On the *Annotations* as a genre see 'New Testament Scholarship' 49–55 with n218.

12 succeeding editions] First in *1527*; in *1519* and *1522*, 'this latter edition'

13 absolutely] Added in *1535*

14 previous ones.] First in *1527*; in *1519* and *1522*, 'the previous one'; cf n12 just above.

15 In the *1516* preface to the annotations on Mark, Erasmus promised, 'if he found leisure,' to add to his annotations of *1516* in order to 'enhance or correct' them. His letters reveal both his discontent with his first edition and his solicitation of help from others; cf eg his letters (1516) to two notable humanists, William Latimer (Ep 417:2–10) and Guillaume Budé (Ep 421:47–80), as well as a 1516 letter from Wolfgang Faber Capito (Ep 459:130–1).

16 In a *1522* addition to the preface to the annotations on Mark, Erasmus declared his intent to make the third edition his last, not because his work could not be improved but because of the pervasive criticism. In spite of this declared intent,

encouragement of outstanding and learned friends,[17] I performed the task more fully so that all the language of the New Testament might be straightforward but still truly Latin[18] – with the exception of some words and expressions that are too widely received to admit of change, such as *fides* [faith] for *fiducia* [trust],[19] *fidelis* [faithful] for *fidens* [trusting],[20] *benedictus* [blessed] for

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he published two more editions, both of them with very significant additions, no doubt 'greater gain for the reader'; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 293 with n1243.

17 Cf eg Wolfgang Faber Capito, who urged Erasmus to make his New Testament an 'offspring worthy of its parent, [to] lick it into shape over and over again, experimenting with the language,' as he, Erasmus, was so well able to do (Ep 459:74–6). Erasmus' claim to have made changes sparingly in the first edition out of fear is somewhat open to question. In some parts of the translation, changes in the first edition are numerous and radical; in other parts, fewer changes were made, as in Luke where Erasmus evidently ran out of time to complete the translation as he would have liked. Additional changes in the second edition, some of them highly provocative, opened the translation to a broader range of attack. See 'New Testament Scholarship' 46 with n202.

18 This is an important characteristic of Erasmus' aims; cf Ep 860:38–40: '… in translating, my rule has been to try first of all to maintain as far as I could a pure Latin style, while respecting the simplicity of the Apostle's language.' Allen Ep 860:35n refers to the *Lucubrationum Erasmi Roterodami index* published in 1519 by Martens, where it was said of the second edition ( Martens edition page 5), that it was 'translated more freely, so that the entire text has been rendered with Latin elegance, but maintaining the plainness of the apostolic speech.' Erasmus had characterized his translation in similar terms in his preface to the *Annotations* for the first edition, in the course of which he says his 'object was to make the language more correct and lucid, not to polish it'; cf Ep 373:196–217 ('Prefaces and Letters' 790) with n42.

19 Erasmus usually translated Greek *πίστις* by *fides* 'faith,' although he thought the Greek word frequently had the sense of 'trust,' in which case it should be rendered by the Latin *fiducia*, and indeed he did very occasionally render it thus; cf ASD VI-2 239. Cf the annotation on Matt 6:30 (*modicae fidei*) and *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* CWE 82 180–1: 'To me the word *fidere* "to have faith" means primarily "to rely on"' (cf LB IX 890B). In a *1527* annotation on Rom 1:17 ('lives by faith') Erasmus attempts to define the various senses in which *fides* is commonly used. For a similar discussion about the resistance to change of certain words that have become standard in the Christian vocabulary see *Ratio* 659 with n895 and the Argument to the *Paraphrase on Romans* CWE 42 14.

20 The Vulgate translated the adjective *πιστός* by *fidelis*, sometimes in the sense of 'faithful,' sometimes in the sense of 'trusting.' In his translation of this word Erasmus usually adopted the Vulgate, but not always, eg in John 20:27 where in *1519* he changed VG *fidelis* to *credens* 'believing,' ' trusting'; cf the annotation

*laudatus* [praised] or *laudandus* [praiseworthy],[21] *in*[22] *nomine Iesu* [in the name of Jesus] for *autore Iesu* [at the instigation of Jesus] or *fiducia Iesu* [with trust in Jesus],[23] *gratia*[24] [grace] for *beneficium gratuitum* [as a free gift].[25] For[26] it seems to me excessively crabby to allow dialecticians, philosophers, rhetoricians, grammarians, physicians, and mathematicians to use special words that are

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on the verse (*incredulus, sed fidelis*), where Erasmus notes that the Latin *fidelis* does not properly reflect the meaning of the Greek ('trusting') but is nevertheless used by 'all Christian writers' in this sense.

21 This comment points to four particularly interesting passages in Erasmus' New Testament: Matt 21:9 and Luke 1:28, where the Vulgate had translated the Greek *εὐλογημένος* by *benedictus*; and Rom 1:25 and 9:5, where *εὐλογητός* is likewise translated by *benedictus*. Erasmus retained the Vulgate in the passages in Matthew and Luke but from *1516* rendered the passages in Romans by *laudandus*. In annotations on the first three passages Erasmus explained his preference for *laudandus*, and in *1519* additions to the annotations on them observed the ineluctable force of church custom in the use of biblical vocabulary. See the annotations on Matt 21:9 (*benedictus qui venit*), on Luke 1:28 (*benedicta tu*), and on Rom 1:25 ('who is blessed'). López Zúñiga objected to Erasmus' translation of the word in Rom 1:25; cf ASD IX-2 164:5–17.

22 *in … fiducia Iesu*] Added in *1522*

23 The expression 'in the name of' is found fairly frequently in the Gospels and Acts, where the Greek noun is preceded by *ἐν* or *εἰς* or *ἐπί*, which VG rendered indiscriminately by the Latin *in*. Erasmus complained that the Vulgate translation was not 'elegant Latin,' and although he generally retained the Vulgate in *1516*, in *1519* he introduced changes, sometimes substituting the Latin *sub* or *per* for the Vulgate's *in,* or by translating the phrase by the ablative absolute without a preposition. But he was not satisfied with this, and in *1522* he quite often replaced the *sub* of *1519* with *in*, thus returning to the Vulgate. Two annotations added in *1522* explain in similar terms the problems he faced; cf the annotation on John 16:26 (*in nomine meo*), where Erasmus notes that the Hebrew idiom represented by this phrase indicates that one acts with authority and power; and the annotation on Acts 4:17 (*in nomine hoc*). A further annotation added in *1527* on Matt 10:41 (*in nomine prophetae*) explains once more the difficulty in turning Hebrew idiom into Latin and calls those critics 'crabby' who cannot allow the Gospels their own special vocabulary – a point he makes in the *1527* addition just below.

24 *gratia … gratuitum*] Added in *1527*

25 In his translation Erasmus consistently retained VG *gratia* for *χάρις*. In both his annotations and paraphrases he endeavoured to explain the Greek in the sense given here, 'free gift'; cf the annotation on Rom 1:5 ('grace and apostleship') and the paraphrase on Eph 2:5–8 CWE 43 313–15.

26 For … Scripture.] Added in *1527*

terms of art and otherwise mean nothing at all or something quite different but to permit no such thing in Holy Scripture.

**[5]** And I have added not a little to previous annotations, and because some people were more eager to smear than to learn, I have fortified them by giving more precise references for the authorities I cited.[27]

**[The Problem of Language in the Translation of Scripture: Elegant versus Barbarous Latin, 6–20]**

**[6]** But those who do not know Latin[28] are offended, and they insist on having the old solecisms they are used to.[29] Such people have the old edition, which is whole and intact, for anything I have to do with it. I have known[30] many who have been repelled by Holy Scripture because of the inelegance (not to say crudeness) of the language. Let the critics take it in good part that I wanted to accommodate these people also, especially since the critics themselves lose nothing by it.

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27 Edward Lee's early (autumn of 1517) criticisms of Erasmus' annotations may have contributed to Erasmus' determination to add precision to his references in *1519*; cf *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 10. Erasmus made the point again and noted the additions to the annotations when in August 1518 he solicited the help of Antonio Pucci to secure a papal letter of approval for the new edition: 'I have added annotations, which are now enlarged, in which I inform the reader what line I have followed and why, resting always on the opinion of ancient authorities,' Ep 860:46–9; cf Ep 860 introduction. With Erasmus' characterization of his critics here compare Jerome's comment in his first preface to the Psalter: 'There are many who prefer to disparage than to learn,' Weber 767.

28 Although Erasmus may refer here in a general way to those whose knowledge of classical Latin was deficient, he had no hesitation to charge some of his opponents with ignorance of Latin, eg in 1520 Vincentius Theoderici (Epp 1126:302–72 and 1196:72–102) and in 1529 Frans Titelmans (Ep 2206:19–20).

29 On the term 'solecism' see Alexander Dalzell's Translator's Note to 'Solecisms' in 'Errors in the Vulgate' 872–4. Erasmus' frequent complaints in *1516* about the inelegant Latin of the Translator forced the issue of solecisms into prominence in the second edition; significantly, Erasmus alluded to this issue in a sentence added in *1519* to his prefatory letter to the *Annotations* of 1515; cf 'Prefaces and Letters' 784 with n10: 'Solecisms that were obvious and unnatural I removed …'

30 I have known] First in *1535*; previously, 'I know,' with the corresponding tense in the subsequent verb: 'I know many who are repelled.'

**[6a]** But[31] those (they say) who turn up their noses at Holy Scripture because of its simplicity are not worth our consideration. I do not change Holy Scripture the slightest bit; I am dealing with translators and corrupters.[32] And I do not remove simplicity; I restore it. And then it is a godly duty and a human kindness[33] to entice the weak at first with some alluring pleasantness.

**[7]** God, they say, is not offended by solecisms. This indeed may be true,[34] but neither is he delighted with them.[35] Augustine excuses incorrectness in language; he does not recommend it. And he excuses it for the uneducated, not for theologians; finally, he tolerates it reluctantly. For he would rather have it changed completely, if that were possible.[36] But if a solecism[37] renders the meaning ambiguous or inaccurate, as I have shown it does in some places, then Augustine[38] hates the solecism. And in fact God hates the proud proponents of solecisms who assail those who speak correctly; they

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31 But … pleasantness.] The paragraph was added in *1527*.

32 Cf the *1527* addition to the *Apologia*, 467 with n61: 'Our concern is with the translators, with the scribes, with the corrupters.'

33 and a human kindness] Added in *1535*

34 This indeed may be true] First in *1535*; previously, 'True perhaps'

35 Cf the *1516* statement, virtually identical, in *Apologia* 477 with n106. Some scholars believe that the statement 'God is not offended by solecisms' is a quotation from Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 2.13; cf eg Heinz Holeczek *Humanistische Bibelphilologie als Reformproblem bei Erasmus von Rotterdam, Thomas More und William Tyndale* Studies in the History of Christian Thought 9 (Leiden 1975) 123 n91; and Erika Rummel *Erasmus asTranslator of the Classics* Erasmus Studies 7 (Toronto 1985) 161 n55. This, however, is not correct. In the chapter cited, Augustine does discuss solecisms, but he only implies that solecisms and barbarisms do not invalidate an honest prayer for forgiveness. Nor does Erasmus himself everywhere condemn solecisms. In a *1516* annotation on Eph 1:18 (*illuminatos oculos*) he cites Jerome, who defended Paul against the slanders of those who complained that solecisms abound in the Apostle's speech; and in the *Modus orandi Deum* Erasmus takes the position of his critics here in the *Contra morosos*: 'God … is not … fastidious … he is not even offended by solecisms, provided the mind is pure' CWE 70 212.

36 With the discussion in this and the next few paragraphs compare the discussion in *Ratio* 656–8, largely from *1519* with some additions in *1520* and *1523*. The two texts together reflect Erasmus' strenuous efforts to undercut his opponents' appeal to Augustine, and to show that under certain circumstaces Augustine permitted – but did not endorse the use of – solecisms. See also *Responsio ad annotationes Lei* 1 (Note 9) CWE 72 99–102.

37 a solecism] Added in *1535*; previously, 'it' implied in the verb.

38 Augustine … the solecism] First in *1535*; previously, '[he] hates [it].'

do not want to learn anything better for themselves, and they do not allow others to do so, like the proverbial dog in the manger.[39]

**[8]** In any event, let me ask this: do they embrace all solecisms or only those to which they are accustomed? If they embrace any solecisms whatever, why do they beat schoolboys when they say, *fuit in domo tuo* [*tuo* instead of *tua* 'He was in your house'] or *friget corpus meus* [*meus* instead of *meum* 'My body is freezing'].[40] Indeed, in church everyone would boo if the deacon read out 'Pilio' for 'Filio' or 'Pillipum' for 'Phillipum.'[41] But nevertheless, the errors they make are often more absurd. But if they are not pleased except by solecisms to which they are accustomed, then it is clear that they are not guided by good judgment but simply find their own warts flattering;[42] and they imitate those who are shocked by the sores of others but are nevertheless not offended by their own familiar mange. And then at the same time, what about those who are not accustomed to such solecisms?

**[9]** Augustine tolerates such a barbarous expression as *Iustus ut palma floriet* [*floriet* instead of *florebit* 'The just man will flourish like a palm tree'].[43] But he tolerates it in the uneducated masses; he[44] would still prefer that they correct it. He allows that the learned say *ossum* [bone] instead of *os* for the word whose genitive is *ossis*,[45] but only whenever they are speaking to the

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39 Cf *Adagia* I X 13.

40 *domus*, a feminine noun, requires the feminine modifier *tua*; *corpus*, neuter, requires the neuter modifier *meum*.

41 Cf the additions (*1519*) to the annotations on Matt 1:16 (*qui vocatur Christus*) and on John 14:26 (*paracletus autem spiritus sanctus*) for similar allusions to 'church pronunciation,' in both of which Erasmus limits the degree to which incorrect pronunciation should be tolerated; cf ASD VI-5 72:179–73:199, ibidem VI-6 140:514–142:553, and 'New Testament Scholarship' 129nn544 and 304 n1278.

42 The source of this remarkable expression is unclear, and it may well be of Erasmus' own invention. Somewhat similar are the words *naevos nostros et cicatrices amamus* 'We love our warts and scars' in Ausonius' letter to his son, prefatory to the poem *Cupido cruciatus* in *Ausonius opuscula* ed Sextus Preste, Bibliotheca Scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana 86 (Leipzig 1978) 116.8–9.

43 Cf *Ratio* 657 with n889, where Erasmus' point is explained. Here, however, Erasmus cites Ps 92 (VG 91):13, though Augustine cites Ps 132 (VG 131):18 in *De doctrina christiana* 2.13.20.

44 he ... correct it.] Added in *1535*

45 Cf *Ratio* 657 with n886, where Erasmus' point is explained. Erasmus uses the same example in *Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae* ASD IX-2 76:309–11. For Augustine's justification of the use of solecisms see *De doctrina christiana* 3.3.7

uneducated who would otherwise not understand it. Now,[46] however, when the masses no longer speak Latin, what Augustine writes about solecisms is no more pertinent to us than if he had admonished a preacher speaking French to Frenchmen that he should use French words known to the masses. Otherwise, why does Augustine himself not use solecisms in his books, even when he is often not understood, even by those who have a little learning?

**[10]** Augustine does not allow solecisms except among the uneducated, as I said, and only in so far as they render the meaning clearer. But I showed that in some places the solecisms of the Translator completely undermine the meaning[47] and that, as a result, exegetes of great reputation have fallen into error.[48]

**[11]** Moreover, their objection that it is improper to subject the Holy Scriptures to the rules of Donatus,[49] though it was lodged by a saintly man, he spoke it not very circumspectly (so[50] I would say, with all due respect). For first of all the language of a translator is not Holy Scripture but rather Scripture is what Moses, the prophets,[51] and the apostles wrote. I emend the language of the Translator, and I recover the light that belongs to Holy Scripture. And then if it is shameful to speak correctly about matters divine, almost all the ancient writers, both Greek and Latin,[52] must be brought before the bar because they have handled theological subject matter not only

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and 4.10.24, where Augustine remarks that he would prefer a barbarism with clarity to proper Latin with obscurity, indeed would even encourage the use of the former when speaking to the uneducated.

46 Now] First in *1535*; previously, 'At this time'

47 Cf 'Solecisms' in 'Errors in the Vulgate,' especially #28, 33, and 41 (880, 882), most of which Erasmus had noted in his annotations. But it is in 'Obscure Passages' that Erasmus points more persistently to the errors of the great and to meaning undermined; cf next note.

48 Cf 'Obscure Passages' in 'Errors in the Vulgate' 888–900. Note the title of this list: 'Obscure Passages Where Translators of Great Renown Have Gone Astray.'

49 On Donatus see *Ratio* 509 with n97 and 656 with n882; for the objection, Ep 843:99–100.

50 so … respect] Added in *1522*; 'saintly man' may be a reference to Gregory the Great, who wrote, '… because I judge it truly unworthy to confine the words of the heavenly oracle within the rules of Donatus' (*Moralia in Iob libri* 1-x 7.220–2 ed M. Adriaen *Corpus christianorum series latina* 143 (Turnhout 1979).

51 the prophets] Added in *1535*

52 both Greek and Latin] Added in *1535*

elegantly but also eloquently, and[53] for that reason have gained the highest praise from the whole church.

**[12]** It seems to me that it is proper for the gospel of Christ to be transmitted (as far as possible) in unsullied and pure language. Proper speech is common to all; barbarism in language takes different forms and is difficult to understand because it is a departure from natural speech. Just as nothing is clearer than correct speech, so too nothing is easier.

**[13]** But if anyone denies that there are any solecisms in this Vulgate translation – I mean those derived not from the language of the apostles but from the dregs of society – let him look at my index,[54] and soon enough, I think, he will change his mind.

**[14]** In the same list he will see in how many places exegetes of great reputation have gone off track simply because of the defects in language. No one should think that in solecisms there is no disadvantage except the lack of pure language.

**[15]** Moreover, though I would not deny that the Greek of the apostles and evangelists departs in some ways from ordinary grammar,[55] there was still no reason for us to add so many outrageous solecisms.

**[16]** And though it was perhaps advantageous in those times for the apostles to use uncultivated language, it might now be advantageous to change this, since nowadays bishops do not even dress as the apostles did; rather, the church has grown more splendid in every sort of way.[56] At that time it was helpful for the apostles to speak the language that was most widespread and was understood by both the literate and the illiterate, since it is clear that Christ himself spoke Aramaic; but that does not mean that those who have learned Latin should now learn a new way to babble because of the solecisms not of the apostles but of the Translator. Accordingly, just as the

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53 and … church.] Added in *1535*

54 Ie the index or list of 'Solecisms' in 'Errors in the Vulgate'; cf n29 above.

55 Cf the annotation on Acts 10:38 (*quomodo iunxit eum*), where Erasmus in *1516* observed that the apostles spoke not the language of Demosthenes but the vernacular of their day, in their case a vernacular influenced by their native Hebrew speech. The comment was soon attacked (cf the letter from Johann Maier of Eck [1518], Ep 769:69–83), in response to which Erasmus vastly enlarged the annotation in *1519*; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 130 with n548.

56 Cf Ep 843:259–61: 'That countrified and simple style in which the New Testament was left to us by the apostles suited those early days; nowadays perhaps it is fitting that we should have it in neater dress, provided it be simple still.'

apostles once used the language that they found was more common among the people, so too it would now be advantageous for Holy Scripture to be handed down in the language common to all who have learned Latin.[57] For it is agreed that what is most correct is most common. What I have said about the language of the apostles also applies to the discourse of the ancient exegetes, since the Latin language was still common among the general public.

**[17]** If it is useful for the divine books to be translated in an unlearned fashion in order that they can be understood by more people, then they should clearly have been translated into French or German. As[58] it is, some are translated in such a way that they are sometimes understood by neither the learned nor the unlearned.

**[18]** If it is not allowable for Christians to speak correctly, why does Augustine in *On Christian Doctrine* place grammar, the mistress of speaking correctly, among the branches of learning necessary for understanding Holy Scripture?[59] Why are there so many grammar schools everywhere? Why are children of such a tender age tortured with such great labours? So that they learn to speak incorrectly?

**[19]** Certainly elegant speech has this advantage, if no other, that it is straightforward and natural, whereas there are hundreds of ways to speak incorrectly.

**[20]** Still, as[60] I have often said already, I do not change a single syllable in the language of the apostles; instead, I restore their language where it has been corrupted by scribes or in some other way. Accordingly, let no one cry

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57 'To all who have learned Latin': With this expression Erasmus has underlined an important aspect of his New Testament project: it is directed towards the learned. Latin is no longer a natural language, but one that is acquired through learning, and its use therefore presupposes objective standards of correctness and eloquence. Cf the citation from Ep 843 in n56 immediately above; indeed, the rather expansive discussion here on eloquent speech and proper Latin has a counterpart in Ep 843 paragraphs 8–32.

58 As … unlearned.] Added in *1527*. For vernacular translations of the Bible in German, Italian, French, and Dutch by 1500 see CWE 39 517–18 n36 and CWE 40 722 n24; also *Paraclesis* 410 with n36.

59 Cf *De doctrina christiana* 3.39.40.

60 as ... already] Added in *1522*. Erasmus would make the point again in a *1527* addition to the *Apologia*; cf 805 n32 above.

out, 'Here he corrects the Gospel, here he emends the Lord's Prayer,'[61] but rather, 'Here he eliminates errors from the manuscripts of the Gospels.' I am no more to be rebuked than someone who uses a broom to sweep the filth out of the temple.[62] For not everything that is in the temple is for that very reason holy.

**[Prerequisites for Biblical Translation: Holy Inspiration and Philological Knowledge, 21–7]**

**[21]** Now, if someone wants to attribute to the Holy Spirit whatever this Translator writes, and if it is therefore a crime to change anything in it, why does Jerome dare to disparage its readings, now[63] criticizing individual words, now a whole sentence, now removing something he asserts has been added. For[64] he does this not infrequently, even in the books that he published

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61 These slogans began to be heard shortly after the publication of the *1516 Novum instrumentum* (cf Ep 456:83–8), and they continued to be tossed about throughout Erasmus' life; cf *Apologia* n71 and the references given there. Cf also the *1519* addition to the annotation on 1 Pet 4:7 (*et vigilate*) and the *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 37 (1520), where Erasmus notes the public nature of this outcry. See further paragraph 49 below and 'New Testament Scholarship' 48 with n207.

62 Cf the prefatory letter to the *Annotations*, Ep 373:156–9 ('Prefaces and Letters' 788): 'In kings' palaces sweepers and cooks are thought respectable'; and *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* CWE 71 66.

63 Now … added.] Added in *1522*. The role of the Holy Spirit in the construction of the text of Scripture was a question with a venerable history. It was raised by Augustine, who thought the translators of the Septuagint had the same spirit as the prophets had when they spoke; cf *De civitate Dei* 18.43. Erasmus had anticipated later controversy in the 1505 preface to his edition of Valla's annotations; cf Ep 182:147–78. The issue became a flashpoint of criticism after the publication of the 1516 *Novum instrumentum*; cf the letter from Johann Maier of Eck (2 February 1518), Ep 769:56–92. The anonymous critic to whose objections Erasmus responded in Ep 843 (7 May 1518) formulated the issue in much the same way as it appears here; cf Ep 843:126–7. The question of the respective roles of translator and Holy Spirit in the Vulgate text was pressed still further by later critics, eg Cousturier and Titelmans, for which see 'New Testament Scholarship' 273–4 and 333.

64 For … Testaments.] Added in *1527*. Erasmus had applied a similar argument in his *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 759D–760C. Jerome had completed his revision of the New Testament by 384 and his translations of the Old Testament by 405, after which he wrote his commentaries on the major prophets, working on them until his death in 420.

long after he had published his translation of the Old and New Testaments. Why do Cyprian, Ambrose, and Augustine dare to give a different reading? Why[65] in solemn worship do churches throughout the world read one thing, sing something else, especially in the Psalms?

**[22]** In his *Preface to Desiderius* Jerome thinks that there is a great difference between a prophet and a translator: 'In the one case, the Spirit predicts what is to come; in the other, scholarship, together with the resources of language, conveys the meaning it apprehends.'[66] And yet in this place Jerome is dealing with the Septuagint, the authority of which was almost sacrosanct and[67] the translators of which Jerome himself confesses were filled with the Holy Spirit. But no one knows who the Translator of the Vulgate was; for Augustine testifies that there were numerous translators, and rather scantily learned ones at that.[68]

**[23]** I think that no translator deserves more honour than those of the Septuagint, whose version the apostles themselves followed not infrequently; yet the church changed their translation as soon as it got a better one.

**[24]** But do they want this honour to be paid only to this Translator or to all translators? If only to this one, let them give a reason for him rather than others. If to all, then wrong has been done to the other translators, whose translations are, in fact, no longer used.

**[25]** A translator does not deserve the same honour as an evangelist; otherwise whoever assembles or transcribes a manuscript of the Gospel will claim the same honour for himself. They are all concerned with the business of the gospel, but in different ways. Indeed, the labour of providing us with a translation of the sacred books into other languages is compared by

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65 Why … Psalms?] Added in *1527*. Cf *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 35 with n175, where the same point is made. Cf also *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 761F–762A.

66 See Jerome's prologue (addressed as a preface to Desiderius) to his translation of the Pentateuch, Weber 3. These words were already cited by Erasmus in the preface to his publication (1505) of Valla's annotations, Ep 182:159–62.

67 and … Holy Spirit.] Added in *1535*. In the prologue Jerome rejects the popular story that the seventy (Septuagint) translators, each in complete isolation, produced under the guidance of the Spirit an identical translation; he adopts rather the more historical account that brought them together as joint consultants, not prophets. He continues: 'A prophet is one thing, a translator another. In the one case the Spirit predicts, etc' – as Erasmus has just cited.

68 In *De doctrina christiana* 2.11.16 Augustine mentions the 'infinite variety of Latin translators.' Augustine refers, however, to the old *Itala* translation that preceded and underlay the Vulgate.

St Jerome with the efforts of Cicero in providing Latin readers with certain treatises of Xenophon, Plato, and Demosthenes.[69]

**[25a]** If God[70] issued an absolutely true prophecy through Caiaphas, an evil man,[71] what is to prevent someone versed in languages from correctly translating Holy Scripture, even if he has no special inspiration from the Spirit?

**[25b]** How often does Jerome, who generally follows orthodox Greek writers, cite the authority of Symmachus, Theodotion, and Aquila, Judaizing heretics?[72] And we take it ill if someone points something out to us! In the book of Daniel, Jerome prefers the edition of Theodotion to the Septuagint translation; Jerome indicates this when he explains the fourth chapter of this prophet.[73]

**[26]** But if, according to Jerome, the best translator is someone who has the best knowledge of the subject matter and the languages,[74] I think that I do not appear to be in either way inferior to this Translator at least (though[75] I wouldn't boast about it). Still this Translator seems to have erred more from carelessness than ignorance[76] and[77] to have made many concessions to the uneducated masses for whom he wrote at that time.

**[27]** Moreover, if the inspiration of the Holy Spirit is absolutely required in a translator, what is to prevent me also from having the Spirit common to

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69 See Jerome's prologue to the Pentateuch, Weber 3–4.

70 If God … prophet.] This and the next paragraph were added in *1527*.

71 Cf John 11:49–53 and 18:14.

72 With the sentiment expressed here compare the comment in *Apologia* 463, and note the reference there in n41 to Jerome's prologue to Job, where these three biblical scholars are called 'Judaizing heretics.' (The three are identified in the same note.) For Erasmus' appeal to them see the annotation on Matt 2:23 (*per prophetas quoniam Nazaraeus*).

73 In the prologue to Daniel Jerome notes that the 'churches of our Saviour Lord' use the translation of Daniel issued by Theodotion rather than the Septuagint, and he justifies the choice; Weber 1341. For Jerome's preference attested in Daniel 4 see Jerome *Commentarius in Danielem prophetam* (on 4:6).

74 See paragraph 22 n66 above.

75 though … ignorance] Added in *1522*

76 In 1515 in his letter to Dorp Erasmus had complained about the Translator's 'clumsiness' and 'inattention,' Ep 337:768.

77 and … that time.] Added in *1527*. Cf the *1535* addition to the annotation on Rom 2:15 ('thoughts accusing'): '… in his [the Translator's] day, the common people were accustomed to speak thus … and it was they … whom he endeavoured to serve.'

all Christians, who ordinarily gives more abundant aid to those who also contribute their own industry?[78]

**[Concerning the Honour and Respect Owed to the Translator of the Vulgate, 27a–j]**

**[27a]** Some[79] praise the holiness, devotion, and learning of this man to the skies, almost placing him higher than the seraphic spirits;[80] but at the same time, if anyone asks them whether he was a Frenchman or from Greater Poland, a Jew or a Christian, a man or a woman, they will have no ready response because no one knows even so much as the name of the person.[81] But they exaggerate his virtues in order to put me into a bad light.

**[27b]** Let us grant that he had the inspiration of the Holy Spirit when he translated, or that St Jerome had it when he corrected this man's translation. We believe that all the Doctors of the church had that same Spirit, and nevertheless it is lawful to diverge from their opinion if someone has discovered something better.

**[27c]** But only in the canonical books is it necessary to believe that there is that special inspiration of the Spirit, whereby they contain nothing divergent from the truth, even if it sometimes seems otherwise to human understanding.[82] But here we must distinguish between what the prophet

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78 Cf the *1527* addition to the *Apologia* (467 with n64): 'The Holy Spirit is present everywhere but exerts his force in such a way as to leave some part of the work for us to do.' Erasmus was not hesitant in debate to claim, as translator of the Bible, the gift of the Holy Spirit; he had done so on his way to Basel in 1518; cf Ep 843:522–38. Cf also 810 n63 above.

79 Some … fullers.] Paragraphs 27a–j were added in *1535*.

80 Perhaps an allusion is intended to St Francis and the Franciscan order, known as the Seraphic order: before discovering the stigmata, St Francis had seen a heavenly flame like a winged seraph flying towards him; cf CWE 40 954n2 and the colloquy 'The Seraphic Funeral' CWE 40 1014 n4.

81 That the Vulgate currently read was not by Jerome but an 'unknown' Translator was an important point in Erasmus' defence of his New Testament project, a point made early and consistently throughout his New Testament work. Cf eg the letter to Dorp (1515), Ep 337:810–26; the prefatory letter to the *Annotations*, Ep 373:62–3 ('Prefaces and Letters 784), Ep 843:21–6; and the *Annotations* passim.

82 Erasmus' anonymous critic of 1518 had made a point of the authority of the canonical books; cf Ep 843:459–70. For the place of the canonical books among the 'sacred writings' see *Ratio* 550–1 with n313; and for the the problem of biblical passages that seem to raise questions about the truth of Scripture see *Ratio* 557–9 with n352.

or apostle wrote and the version of the Translator or the corruption of the scribe. Then again, we must distinguish between a defect of language and a defect of meaning.[83] That there should be a defect of language in the writings of Paul is no more shameful to the Apostle than if it were said that he was wearing a cloak with a hole in it.

**[27d]** Then again, this honour and authority is not owing to prophets and apostles except in those volumes that the church has received into the canon. For it is probable that Paul wrote letters about various matters, but if any of these should come to light, we would not immediately be forced to embrace them as oracles of the Holy Spirit. So much the less should this authority that is due only to canonical books be attributed to this unknown Translator, one among the many whom Augustine admits were not well educated.[84]

**[27e]** But the Roman church has accepted this translation. Not even this is absolutely true. Anyone who wishes can observe what the Roman church reads; he will find many variants. The current version seems to belong to the French,[85] who adopted it when they grew tired of such infinite variety. And it was not accepted in such a way that it is wrong to point out where a better translation could have been made.

**[27f]** Some who are more fair do not indeed condemn my efforts but are upset because I sometimes treat with too little courtesy a Translator whom the church has honoured for so many years. On this point I acknowledge some guilt, as is shown by the fact that in later editions I toned down many things[86] – and indeed would have done the same in the very first edition if I had been warned. But what can you do with people who think it is intolerable effrontery whenever I remark that the Translator indulges himself in too much variety of expression?[87] I accuse him of a human failing; I do not

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83 It was a fundamental principle in Erasmus' defence of his translation that a distinction must be observed between the words and the sense of Scripture; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 48 with n205; also *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 763C and paragraph 28 below.

84 Cf Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 2.11.16; and n68 above.

85 Erasmus ascribes the current version of the Vulgate to France; he probably has the thirteenth-century French 'correctories' in mind, not the Alcuinian recension in the time of Charlemagne. For these correctories see Samuel Berger 'Des essais qui ont été faits à Paris au treizième siècle pour corriger le texte de la Vulgate' *Revue de théologie et de philosophie* 16 (1883) 41–66.

86 Cf *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 38, where a similar expression is translated 'some things were rephrased.' For Erasmus' treatment of the Translator in the editions see 'New Testament Scholarship' 63–5, 298.

87 'Variety of expression': *copia*. Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 64 with n255.

accuse him of deliberate falsehood or sinful impiety; and I think that he was a good man.

**[27g]** They throw up to me that, in various lists and annotations showing solecisms or places rendered ineptly, I have tried to make him contemptible. That was never my intention, but I was driven to it by the stupid and malicious clamours of many critics. If someone wants proof of this, in the first edition no such index was added.[88] Their barking could have been ignored if it had been confined to private circles, but it erupted in crowded gatherings of academics, in sermons before the public, in the courts and tabletalk of the loftiest princes. Indeed, where did it not burst forth? And there was no limit, no end to it. And it was not ordinary people who staged this play but reverend and utterly tragic performers, Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, Carthusians,[89] venerable to the unlearned masses not only because of the majesty of their religious orders but also because of the title of doctor – and some were conspicuous even for their mitres. And so if in the indexes I happened to make any remarks that were too free, they should be attributed to the utterly unprincipled effrontery of such men and not to me.

**[27h]** In various places I said that some have fallen into degrading errors or mistakes they should be ashamed of.[90] I could have said they fell into 'remarkable' or 'obvious' errors. But these critics think that 'degrading' [*turpiter*] means the same as 'criminal' [*scelerate*]. I used 'degrading' to mean

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88 'Index' refers here to the lists below in 'Errors in the Vulgate.' Absent from the first edition, in *1519* and *1522* they were part of the prefatory material, in *1527* they were placed after the *Annotations*, just preceding the 'Subject Index,' in *1535* they were omitted entirely as being too offensive; cf the Translator's Note 866 and 'New Testament Scholarship' 293.

89 While these orders harboured numerous people hostile to Erasmus' New Testament project, each is marked by one or two major protagonists: of the Dominicans, Vincentius Theoderici; of the Franciscans, Henry Standish; of the Carmelites, Nicolaas Baechem; and of the Carthusians, Pierre Cousturier. Erasmus appears here to refer to incidents described in more detail in his letters; see eg for Theoderici Ep 1196:11–23, 152–76 and Ep 1167:46–81 and cf *Manifesta mendacia* CWE 71 114–15; for Standish, Ep 1126:21–85; for Baechem, Epp 1162:41–93, 1196:598–645; for Cousturier see 810 n63 above. For biographies see CEBR; and for the monastic orders, Rummel *Catholic Critics* I 121–44.

90 Cf *Ratio* 499 with n51, where Erasmus had spoken of the manifest and shameful errors of theologians of the first rank, a passage cited by Cousturier to which Erasmus responded in the *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 756E–776A. Cf also *Apologia* 473 with n91. Erasmus repeatedly speaks of this in the *Contra morosos*; cf paragraph 10 with nn47, 48 and paragraphs 14 and 34 with n109.

'unseemly,' and it seems to me that one ought to be ashamed of any error in handling Scripture. Otherwise, why does St Jerome write that, when others praised his earlier commentary on Obadiah, it made him blush?[91] If one does not have to be ashamed of a mistake made because of carelessness, then Jerome had written even that commentary with industry and good intentions.

**[27i]** The ancient Doctors also saw solecisms in this Translator, whose version Jerome corrected but never emended except to restore the meaning; he overlooked faults in the language. If it is a sin to point out a solecism or a place where the meaning is ineptly rendered, how much more serious a crime would it be to do the same in the Old Testament, which, according to them, was totally – or almost totally – translated for us by Jerome from Hebrew and Chaldaean sources. But in fact there have been many who in those books not only criticize the language but also reject the meaning as totally wrong. Yet no one takes them to task. To say nothing of Reuchlin, Nicholas of Lyra and Paul of Burgos dared to do just that. And, to come to those who are still alive, so do Paul, bishop of Fossembrone, and the reverend lord Tomasso, Cardinal Cajetanus in both the New and the Old Testament, Felice in the Psalter, Agostino of Gubbio in the Pentateuch.[92] They present

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91 For Jerome's opinion on his juvenile, allegorical commentary see *Prologus* to his *Commentarius in Abdiam prophetam* PL 25 1097A–1100A.

92 In this *1535* addition Erasmus' appeal to the example of distinguished biblical scholars has a loose parallel in his *1516* letter to Henry Bullock, where he also mentions Felice da Prato and Nicholas of Lyra; cf Ep 456:102–4, 136–7. Of those mentioned here, all but two were contemporaries of Erasmus. **Nicholas of Lyra** (d 1349) wrote *Postillae* that reflected his knowledge of Hebrew and that in early editions accompanied the biblical text along with the *Glossa ordinaria* (cf CWE 44 xviii n43 and 134 n12). **Paul of Burgos** (c 1350–1435) '… a learned rabbi who converted to Christianity … wrote *Additiones* to Lyra's *Postilla* CWE 72 96 n137. He is said to have 'surpassed [Lyra] in his knowledge of Hebrew, though not in exegetical skill' NCE 11 33.

The other scholars cited here were contemporaries of Erasmus, whose biographies appear in CEBR. **Johann Reuchlin** (1454/5–1522), a celebrated humanist scholar, opposed (1510) the suppression of all Hebrew books, a measure advocated by Johann Pfefferkorn; cf Ep 290. Erasmus acknowledged Reuchlin's contribution to the Jerome edition of 1516 (Ep 335:311–22), but Reuchlin, who published a Hebrew grammar and dictionary, was 'most eminent for his work in Hebrew philology and his studies of the Cabbala' CWE 39 244; cf Translator's Note to *Paraclesis* 398 with n17. **Paul of Middleburg** (Fossembrone) (1445–1533) is best known for his interest in calendar reform, challenging the traditional dating of Easter; cf Ep 326:113–15. Erasmus regarded him as 'in no way inferior to

numerous places where they freely disagree with the translation of Jerome. And their labours are received with applause, and rightly so. But if I strive to make the slightest changes, the whole world is in an uproar. But this is what almost always happens when someone blazes a trail to something extraordinary. The first hisses of a serpent inspire terror.[93]

**[27j]** I too could have overlooked solecisms; but to overlook the places where the exponents of Scripture stumble is not courtesy but wrongheadedness. The Translator has been sufficiently excused for solecisms on these grounds: he wrote not for the learned but for the general public, for artisans, weavers, and fullers.

**[Principles of Translation: Language and Meaning, 28–9]**

**[28]** I hear that some are so superstitious that they will not allow a single word of the Gospels to be changed in translation, as if such rigidity would give a version and not a perversion. Discourse consists of two elements: language as its body and meaning as its soul.[94] If both can be rendered, I have

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Reuchlin in native intelligence,' Ep 2465:85–6. Agostino Steuco disagreed and disapproved of Paul's attempt to show that the Old Testament Vulgate was not entirely Jerome's; cf Ep 2465:88–99 and Allen Ep 2513:141–62. **Felice da Prato** (c 1458–1538), a Jewish convert to Christianity, 'obtained permission from Leo X to make a new Latin translation of the Bible. Only the Psalter was completed … (Venice 1515). He also edited a *Biblia rabbinica* … (Venice 1518 … with many variants 1525, 1533),' Ep 456:103n. **Cajetanus** (Tomasso de Vio, 1469–1534), made cardinal of San Sisto in 1517, acted on behalf of Rome in German affairs and opposed the Lutheran movement. Erasmus, at first critical of the cardinal, had changed his attitude by 1521. In later life Cajetanus made translations of the Psalms from the Hebrew and wrote commentaries on the Gospels and parts of the Old Testament. Cajetanus fully adopted the principle of *Hebraica* and *Graeca veritas*, and 'insisted that the Vulgate was insufficient for serious biblical studies' NCE 2 854. **Agostino Steuco** (1497/8–1548) of Gubbio (Eugubinum) published in 1529 an edition of the Old Testament based on a collation of the Septuagint and the original Hebrew, with his own translation added. For his relation to Erasmus see 'New Testament Scholarship' 344 with n1480.

93 Cf Ep 2449:4–5: 'I may not have been the first, but I was certainly among the first in our regions to suffer the hissings of this serpent.' Cf Erasmus' letter to the reader (1535) in 'Prefaces and Letters' 781 with n1.

94 Cf 814 n83 above.

nothing against it; but if not, then it would be preposterous[95] for a translator to cling to the words and diverge from the meaning.

**[29]** If they absolutely insist on rendering word for word, why does this Translator so often depart from the words of the original, sometimes even when he is not motivated by any advantage? Certainly, whenever possible, a translator should aim at expressing the meaning faithfully in the most suitable language.[96]

**[The Authority of the Vulgate, 30–9]**

**[30]** It is not clear or even likely that this translation, which we generally use, was ever approved by the authority of any synod. And it is not likely that the Fathers in synods used only this version, since the synods were made up of Greeks, Latins, and speakers of other languages. One of them would quote in Greek; another would follow Ambrose; another, Cyprian; another, someone else,[97] as long as[98] that version had public acceptance.

**[31]** Concerning the Septuagint, Jerome did not hesitate to pronounce that they translated into ambiguous language things they did not understand;[99] and somewhere[100] he says their rendition is false.[101] In not a few places he

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95 Cf *Adagia* v i 30: *praepostere* 'back to front,' where Erasmus explains that the word may be applied to an expression in which 'what naturally comes first is put second.' Cf the Translator's Preface to the *Paraphrase on Matthew* CWE 45 xii and, in the same volume, 68 n50.

96 Erika Rummel discusses Erasmus' principles of translation in *Erasmus as a Translator of the Classics* (Toronto 1985), especially 91–2. Rummel refers to the *Apologia*: 'whoever translates into a foreign language is compelled to diverge far and wide,' translated in this volume (468) as, 'whoever translates into a foreign language is compelled to depart completely from the letters and dots.'

97 These comments point to the critique of Maarten van Dorp, who in 1514 argued that the use of the Vulgate by the councils, which when duly constituted cannot err, demonstrated its authority; cf Ep 304:111–22. To this Erasmus had replied in 1515, 'Pray produce me one synod in which this version has been approved,' Ep 337:809–10.

98 as long as … acceptance.] Added in *1527*

99 Cf the prologue to the Pentateuch, Weber 4:35–6: 'They [the LXX] made their translation before the advent of Christ, and those things of which they had no knowledge they represented with ambiguous expression.'

100 somewhere] First in *1522*; in*1519*, 'elsewhere'

101 Erasmus wrote in the same vein to Maarten Lips in response to the anonymus critic of 1518; cf Ep 843:375–80. In the prologue to the Pentateuch Jerome calls the story about the seventy separate cells *mendacium* 'a lie'; he does not call the

specifically points out that they clearly erred in rendering the meaning of Scripture. Why, then, should we think it a sacrilege to disagree with this unknown Translator?

**[32]** The[102] Roman church, as some say, has used this version for some years. Though I should grant this, this is not the only one that church uses. For it has readings from Jerome and from Ambrose. And the singing in church often differs from this version.[103] And such use by the church does not constitute a judgment that there is nothing in it that could not be better translated.

**[33]** For a long time the church used an old translation of the Old Testament, which rendered the Greek of the Septuagint word for word to produce absolutely absurd language. This will be clear to anyone who reads Augustine's *Modes of Expression*.[104] That fact did not make him scorn the better version that Jerome substituted for the old one (as they imagine and[105] are partly correct in doing so).

**[34]** But if someone should contend that we should never diverge from the Translator at all, let him first justify the places where I show that he very clearly nodded, or was mistaken, or rendered the Greek with so little skill that because of his awkward[106] translation consummate theologians who knew only Latin or[107] had not consulted the Greek manuscripts made remarkable[108]

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*conversio* 'rendition,' 'translation' a lie; cf Weber 3:25–9. Cf Ep 326:88–93 and *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 35 with n170.

102 The … uses.] First in *1535*, when three expressions were added: 'as some say,' 'this version,' and 'Though I should grant this.' Previously the passage read: 'But the Roman church has used it now for some years. Yet this is not the only one that church uses.' Cf paragraph 27e.

103 Erasmus made the point again in the *1527* addition in paragraph 21.

104 For Augustine's work *In Heptateuchum locutiones* see 'New Testament Scholarship' 52 with n226. Augustine had annotated curious and difficult expressions in the pre-Hieronymian translations.

105 and … doing so] Added in *1535*. Although Augustine was able to recognize the value of Jerome's translation, he thought no translation was to be preferred to the Septuagint; cf *De civitate Dei* 18.43; and Fitzgerald *Augustine* 461 (article on Jerome).

106 awkward] *incommodam* first in *1522*; in *1519*, *ineptam* 'inept'

107 or … manuscripts] Added in *1527*

108 remarkable] *insigniter* first in *1535*; previously, *turpiter* 'unseemly,' the word he will say in *1535* he may not use; see next note.

(for I dare not say 'unseemly')[109] mistakes. If these facts are well known and beyond all denial, let them grant that the Translator was only human (not to use any harsher term).

**[35]** Even if many errors are such that they were probably introduced by scribes, in that case,[110] though the church may approve of the translation, it certainly does not approve of the corruption.

**[36]** And not everything that has been accepted into ecclesiastical usage is immediately to be taken as accepted with conscious judgment. Some things creep in casually, and the church turns a blind eye to them, especially if they do not seem to constitute a danger to faith or morals. Indeed, it is possible that some such matters are temporarily not even known to the church.[111]

**[37]** When Damasus asked Jerome to undertake the business of correcting the New Testament from the Greek sources,[112] certainly the church already had a text it was reading and perhaps had had it for some centuries. If it was correct, what need was there for Jerome to emend it? If it was corrupt, then it is clear that the church was temporarily using a text that needed to be improved. I say the same about the Old Testament.

**[38]** The authority of Holy Scripture is not shaken when errors are removed from manuscripts; actually it is shaken if it is clear that we are using corrupt copies; and that certainly cannot be denied.[113] If[114] no one were to make any move to remedy this defect, since it is the nature of human affairs to go from bad to worse, then indeed the authority of Scripture would be shaken because of confused copies.

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109 for I dare not say 'unseemly'] Added in *1535*. Cf the preceding note. Erasmus frequently notes the 'remarkable,' 'shameful,' 'embarrassing' mistakes of the great exegetes; cf paragraph 27h. For the mistakes of one 'consummate theologian,' Thomas Aquinas, see the annotations on Rom 11:11 ('that they may emulate them') and on Rom 12:1 ('reasonable service') CWE 56 302 and 322 with n5. Addressing Cousturier, Erasmus refers to the 'Index' of *1522* and provides a lengthy sample of the mistakes of Thomas and others; cf *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 775F–776C.

110 in that case] Added in *1527*

111 Cf the letter to Henry Bullock (1516) in which Erasmus supposes that the Vulgate itself 'slipped into circulation' and then came into general use without approval by a conscious decision of the church, Ep 456:42–58.

112 For the request of Damasus see *Methodus* n27.

113 Cf the discussion on the authority of Scripture in relation to textual corruption in *Apologia* 462–6 with n51. Cf also Ep 337:860–3.

114 If … copies.] Added in *1535*

**[39]** We must wish that Sacred Scripture contained no errors, and we must strive to make it so, as much as[115] possible. But this has not happened after thirteen hundred years, and perhaps it will never come to pass completely. We will do our part well if there are as few mistakes as possible.

**[The Witness of the Manuscripts and the Authority of Scripture, 40–53]**

**[40]** Accordingly, not even I claim to have removed all errors, but certainly I will dare to claim that I have removed very many and that I have brought it to pass that it will be possible in the future to use codices with very few errors, if someone wishes to follow my thread and make emendations with the authority of the Roman pontiff.[116]

**[41]** For I do not publish this edition as if I intended it to be completely free of errors. For I translated whatever I found most frequently and most uniformly in the Greek,[117] pointing out where our [Vulgate] version agrees or disagrees with it and indicating what seems to me to be the most correct.

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115 as much as] First in *1522*; in *1519*, 'as far as'

116 From an early point, critics objected that Erasmus' project lacked proper authorization; cf the letter to Maarten van Dorp, Ep 337:844–5, and the letter to Henry Bullock, Ep 456:32–4. The anonymous critic behind the letter of 7 May 1518 had apparently demanded papal authority; cf Ep 843:488–90. Indeed, before Erasmus had completed the preparation of his second edition, he had made every effort to acquire papal authorization and was gratified by the letter from Leo X that prefaced every edition from *1519* to *1535*; cf 'Prefaces and Letters' 772–3. Cf paragraph 52 below with n144; and 'New Testament Scholarship' 107 with n463 and 113–14. 'Codices with very few errors' may be a reference to manuscripts prepared as printer's copy or simply to Erasmus' corrected texts as printed. As here, so elsewhere Erasmus expressed his expectation of the lasting value of his work on the New Testament; cf Epp 373:48–54 ('Prefaces and Letters' 784) and 384:64–6.

117 Erasmus insisted that he set himself the task not of editing a Greek text but of translating into Latin the Greek he found in his manuscripts; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 44 with n194. The readings he found in his manuscripts were relatively uniform, as he had access mainly to (late) Byzantine manuscripts, though other readings and types of manuscripts were known. It was, in any case, in his interest to downplay variation between the Greek manuscripts, as he needed the presumption of a more or less stable Greek text at the base of his New Testament project. For an overview of the Greek manuscripts used by Erasmus see Krans *Conjectural Critics* 335–6; for a detailed study of Erasmus' use of manuscripts see ASD VI-2 6–7 and ASD VI-3 1–6.

**[41a]** Here[118] I should note in passing that some Greek manuscripts of the New Testament have been corrected from Latin copies. This was done as part of a treaty between the Greeks and the Roman church, a treaty that is witnessed by the bull called 'golden.'[119] For it was thought that this, too, would contribute to establishing concord. Once I also came across such a manuscript,[120] and a manuscript of this sort is said to be still preserved in the papal library.[121] But to correct our copies from that one would be to use a Lesbian ruler, as they say.[122] Rather, we should pay attention to the readings of the ancient Greeks, Origen, Athanasius, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, Chrysostom, Cyril, and Theophylact. I wanted to give this warning because recently some persons have been boasting that they have noted hundreds of places in the copy in the papal library where it agrees with our Latin Vulgate and disagrees with my version.[123] But if they wish to turn the authority of the Vatican Library against me, the manuscript followed for the New Testament by Francis, formerly the cardinal-bishop of Toledo, not only was from that

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118 Here … the Vulgate.] This paragraph was added in *1535* and reflects the epistolary exchanges with Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda from October 1533 to July 1534; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 344–5 with n1484.

119 For the 'Golden Bull' and Erasmus' (mistaken) appeal to it see n123 below and 'New Testament Scholarship' 345 with n1486.

120 Cf *Apologia qua respondet inuectivis Lei* CWE 72 36, where Erasmus reports that he once stopped the proofreaders of his 1516 edition from using one particular manuscript for corrections. For the same story see *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1049D.

121 One of the first references in the history of New Testament scholarship to the famous Codex Vaticanus (Vatican Library, Gr 1209), cited in critical editions of the Greek New Testament as B. It was possibly during his debate with Lee that Erasmus sought textual confirmation for 1 John 5:7–8 from Paolo Bombace, papal secretary in Rome. Bombace replied with quotations from this codex. The letter was dated 18 June 1521 and arrived too late for Erasmus to use in his responses to Lee, or even in his third edition, although he did refer to it in his response to López Zúñiga; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 197 with n766. The citation from Codex Vaticanus was available, of course, for the fourth edition.

122 Cf *Adagia* I v 93. This is a familiar image in Erasmus' work; cf n206 below and *Paraclesis* n63.

123 By 'some persons' Erasmus refers to Sepúlveda, who had collated Erasmus' Greek text with both the Vulgate text and the Codex Vaticanus, and found 365 places where this codex agreed with the Vulgate rather than with Erasmus' Greek text; cf Allen Ep 2873:30–4. Erasmus replied (17 February 1534) that Codex Vaticanus had been accommodated to the Vulgate, following the agreement represented in the Golden Bull, and he noted as here that the true reading is to be found in the texts of the Greek commentators; cf Allen Ep 2915:37–46.

same library but was sent by Leo X so that he could follow it as a trustworthy copy. But that manuscript agrees almost everywhere with my translation, disagreeing with the one written in majuscule letters, which some people are now throwing up to me. For it has to disagree if the Vatican manuscript agrees with the Vulgate.[124]

**[42]** I know that sacred matters are to be treated with religious reverence; therefore, even though I was engaged in a minor task, I was as circumspect as I could be. I collated the most ancient and reliable manuscripts in both languages, and indeed no small number of them. I investigated the commentaries of ancients and moderns, both Greek and Latin. I noticed the various readings they furnished. I weighed the meaning of the passage, and only then did I pronounce what I thought. No, I did not even pronounce; rather, I informed the reader, leaving everyone free to make up his own mind.[125]

**[43]** Bede, Rabanus,[126] Thomas, Lyra, and Hugh of St Cher – and others more obscure than these[127] – think it sufficient to note, 'Another reading is as follows,'[128] giving something they had come across written or perhaps

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Sepúlveda responded (23 May 1534) that he could find no evidence that such an agreement had ever been made; cf Allen Ep 2938:99–102. Erasmus was forced to agree; cf Allen Ep 2951:49–55 (3 July 1534). Cf n119 above.

124 For his fourth edition Erasmus made use of the Greek New Testament published in the Complutensian Polyglot Bible and noted the very close agreement between its text and his own; cf a *1527* annotation on Matt 5:11 (*omne malum*) and the *1535* addition to the annotation on Luke 10:1 (*et alios septuaginta duos*) ASD VI-5 534:342–7.

125 For similar statements of Erasmus' understanding of his endeavour cf eg Epp 373:14–71 ('To the Pious Reader'), 384:55–66 ('To Leo X') ('Prefaces and Letters' 783–5, 770), and *Apologia* 462 with n36.

126 Bede, Rabanus] Added in *1527*. For these two and the other exegetes mentioned here see *Apologia* n45.

127 Erasmus may have been thinking of Byzantine dictionaries, of Petrus Comestor's *Historia scholastica*, of Giovanni Balbi's *Catholicon*, of Remigius of Auxerre, Jean Gerson, Peter Lombard (*Sentences*), and Bernard of Clairvaux. See ASD VI-6 8.

128 The expression *alia litera* 'another reading' is very common in Thomas Aquinas' works; cf the annotation on Rom 2:24 ('is blasphemed') for an allusion to the expression. Other exegetes used comparable expressions, eg 'some manuscripts have,' 'thus it is written in some manuscripts.' In 1525 Erasmus, writing to Noël Béda, complained that Pierre Cousturier would accept no translation (therefore no reading) except that of the Vulgate, and added, 'He does not realize that the charge [that readings different from the Vulgate are unacceptable] applies also to Thomas, Bede, and Nicholas of Lyra, who frequently cite a different reading, simply translating it without adverse comment,' Ep 1571:45–7.

corrupted in some manuscript; and they are thought to be performing a useful service. And why is there such an outcry against me, even though I used many arguments and the authority of the most eminent writers to restore true readings?

**[44]** If variety undermines the credibility of books, the manuscripts varied long ago in[129] the time of Origen, the time of Jerome, the time of Bede, the time of Thomas, and finally they also vary today in our time; and yet the sacred books still maintain their authority.

**[45]** If some corrupt passages diminish the authority of Holy Scripture, that had come about long ago in the time of Origen, who in his eighth homily on Matthew complains about it as follows: 'I have found many differences among the manuscripts, whether from the negligence of the scribes or from the recklessness of some of them, or because of those who neglect to correct the writing, or because of those who follow their own bent in adding something to correct copies or removing something from them.'[130] Do you hear, reader, how much the books varied even then? Do you hear how corrupt they were? Do you hear how some things were added or subtracted?

**[46]** And just as Origen did not dare to use obeli and asterisks to make pronouncements (especially in the New Testament), but only to inform the reader,[131] so too I showed separately[132] what I thought and why, never[133] laying a finger on the received version, never claiming to do anything more than

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129 in … in our time] Added in *1522*

130 These words are found in Origen's *Commentarius in evangelium secundum Matthaeum* 15.14 (on Matt 19:16–30), not in the 'eighth homily' of (Pseudo-) Origen. Erasmus also refers to this comment in a *1527* addition to the *Apologia*; cf n47.

131 Origen used obeli (daggers) and asterisks to indicate text-critical decisions on questionable passages to be omitted or to be inserted in the biblical text. He used the system in the Old Testament in his annotation of the Septuagint in comparison with the Hebrew text, but did not use the system for the New Testament. Cf the reference cited in the preceding note and his explicit remarks given in the *vetus interpretatio* at the bottom of PG 13 1293–4: 'However in the copies of the New Testament I thought I could not do the same without danger, but should only explain my conjectures and the reasons and causes for them.'

132 separately] Added in *1527*. Erasmus refers to his annotations as separated from his biblical text, in the 1516 edition placed after the complete text of the New Testament, in editions from 1519 placed in a separate volume.

133 never … Athanasius.] Added in *1527*. By 'received version' Erasmus means the Vulgate.

render into Latin what is contained in the Greek codices that were used by orthodox Fathers such as Basil, Chrysostom, Cyril, Athanasius.

**[47]** In this perhaps I outdid Origen, for he had nothing to follow in the New Testament except the Greek manuscripts.[134] I compared the Greek manuscripts with the Latin[135] and was aided by the most reliable exegetes in both languages, whereas he was almost the very first to write about Holy Scripture.

**[48]** If someone should claim that there are no errors in Holy Scripture, what will he do with those places that are so clearly corrupt that there is no escaping the fact? But if they grant that some places are corrupt, why do they not allow us to correct whatever seems to need correction?

**[49]** But I hear some of them saying, 'We accept the facts, but the masses are scandalized if they perceive that there is anything corrupt or unintelligible in the codices that we have followed up till now.'[136] First of all, these things are written not for the masses but for the learned, especially students of theology.[137] They should not be offended. And I call my task not correction but rather annotation. I cause no trouble for anyone who wants to cite another

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134 But cf the annotation on Rom 1:4 ('who was predestined'), where Erasmus, though puzzled, imagines that Origen might have, in his diligence, tracked down Latin manuscripts.

135 Erasmus rightly assumed that Greek manuscripts underlay the Vulgate text so that Latin texts could serve as a witness to the original Greek text, though somewhat removed from it. He did not know that the Vulgate text in most instances was based on Greek manuscripts of a type different from those he had used, which were of the Byzantine type.

136 This was an objection apparently widespread from an early point in Erasmus' New Testament scholarship, though articulated in various ways; cf eg the letter of Maarten van Dorp (1514), Ep 304:150–2, Erasmus' reply, Ep 337:860–3, and the anonymous critic to whom Erasmus replied in Ep 843:53–7 and 345–7.

137 Erasmus makes assertions of this kind elsewhere as well. In the *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* (Note 108) Erasmus wrote: 'For I never changed anything in the public reading and the text of the church, indeed not even the text used at universities. I address the reader in his study' CWE 72 225 with n890; at the end of the long *1535* addition to the annotation on Rom 5:12 ('in whom [or, in which] all have sinned'), he insisted that 'it is hardly in bedrooms that my [annotations] are read, for I have written them for theologians, not for schoolteachers' CWE 56 151. For other statements of this kind see *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 35 with n173, *Apologia adversus monachos* LB IX 1031D, and *Apologia* nn59 and 65.

version or to follow an old or even a corrupt version. Rather, the scandal arises from those who scream that someone is correcting Sacred Scripture and the Lord's Prayer,[138] crying out in sermons before the public, in drinking parties, in wagons and ships among illiterates and empty-headed women.

**[50]** Sad indeed is the plight of Sacred Scripture if its authority depends on uneducated scribes (and such they usually are) or drunken printers.[139]

**[51]** They do not cry out against those who clearly corrupt the holy manuscripts day after day, although the people who dare to do so are utterly illiterate. They shout at me, a person who is not entirely unlearned, I think, or inexperienced in this kind of pursuit at least, which depends on skill in languages. Why should those reckless persons be allowed to corrupt whatever they choose, while I am not allowed to restore the text, relying on ancient manuscripts and the authority of the most approved exegetes?[140]

**[52]** No authority is required of them; it is enough for them to scribble on paper.[141] Of me almost miracles[142] are required. 'Why,' they say, 'should we believe Erasmus?' If they distrust Erasmus, let them trust whatever theologian they like.[143] But then if I have been given the authority to translate

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138 Cf paragraph 20 with n61.

139 Cf *Adagia* II i 1 'Make haste slowly,' where Erasmus in the 1508 Aldine edition eulogizes Aldo Manuzio, contrasting his work as a printer with the shoddy work of others, to which was added in the sixth edition (*1526*) an even more stinging portrait of the latter. In 1508 Erasmus spoke of the corruptions that occurred to the text 'by the fault of those common printers who reckon one pitiful gold coin in the way of profit worth more than the whole realm of letters' CWE 33 10; in 1526 he noted the corruption of manuscripts by scribes but added, 'How little is the damage done by a careless or ignorant scribe, if you compare him with a printer!' CWE 33 11. Cf Froben's witness (1516) to the integrity of printers, 'Prefaces and Letters' 765–6.

140 Cf the preface to Erasmus' edition of Jerome, II 3 (1516): 'Will you really consider it pious and honest to permit any ignoramus to introduce whatever he pleases and corrupt whatever he pleases and not permit students and scholars to reject the spurious and emend the corrupted?' (quoted from CWE 61 95; cf Ep 326:74–7). Cf n144 below.

141 Cf Horace *Satires* 1.4.36, recalling critics' comments on the satirist who delights readers by 'whatever he once scribbled on paper.'

142 almost miracles] Added in *1527*; previously, 'authority' was understood: 'Of me [it, ie authority] is required.'

143 whatever … they like] Added in *1535*; previously, 'let them trust a theologian.'

Sacred Scripture, are they surprised if I dare to open my mouth a bit about some reading in the text?[144]

**[53]** But I do not demand that they believe me. Let them believe the ancient and corrected copies, let them believe the truth of the Greek text, especially when its readings agree with the exegesis of the orthodox Fathers. Finally, if they do not believe even them, let them consider the matter for themselves, and[145] if they have an improvement, let them produce it instead of snapping at the one who provides information. For[146] I do not block anyone from the path of seeking improvements; no indeed, the path is quite open.

**[The Appeal to Ecclesiastical Authority, 54–8]**

**[54]** 'Damasus,' they say, 'assigned this task to Jerome.' He assigned it, but as a friend, not as the supreme pontiff. We read that he assigned it; we do not read that he approved of the result.[147] Finally, it is beyond all controversy that the corrected version of Jerome is not extant, at least not in its entirety.[148] I have[149] clearly shown this elsewhere. And even if we fully grant that the text was corrected by Jerome (a point[150] that is nevertheless easy to refute with unanswerable arguments), it is clear that his correction was once again corrupted.

**[55]** 'No attempt should be made,' they say, 'without the authorization of a synod.'[151] Could they say anything more ridiculous than this? For me to show what seems to be corrupted by a scribe or what might have been bet-

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144 On the authority required of the translator see paragraph 40 above with n116. The passage cited above (n140) from the preface to the Jerome edition continues: 'They feel no indignation at the imposter who without anyone's authority corrupts the sacred books; their anger is reserved for those who in the absence of the authority of the entire church correct what has been corrupted' CWE 61 95; cf Ep 326:77–81.

145 and … it] Added in *1527*

146 For … open.] Added in *1527*

147 Cf Ep 843:558–60, 564–5: 'It is known therefore that the New Testament was revised at the request of Pope Damasus; but it is not known that he approved Jerome's revision … Damasus does not lay this task upon him by virtue of being supreme pontiff of the world.'

148 at least not in its entirety] Added in *1535*

149 I have … elsewhere.] Added in *1527*. Cf *Apologia* 460 with nn25 and 26. Cf also Ep 337:811–12: 'That it is not Jerome's is shown by Jerome's own prefaces.'

150 a point … arguments] Added in *1522*

151 On the demand that Erasmus' translation be authorized by a synod see Epp 456:32–4 and 843:351–6.

ter rendered by the Translator, especially drawing upon the judgment of the ancient Fathers, for this must an entire synod be assembled? Every day new commentaries are written on Sacred Scripture, pronouncements are issued about the most serious matters, many articles are laid down,[152] and all of this is done without requiring any synod.

**[56]** What if I had versified the New Testament, as Juvencus did,[153] or had elucidated it in a paraphrase – do they think that would have required the convocation of a synod? As it is, I only translate what is in the Greek,[154] sometimes not approving of its readings and[155] preferring ours, although, apart from corruptions, there is nothing in the Greek that poses any danger to the Christian doctrine.

**[57]** But if they think it is a crime to have anything different from this version, the commentaries of Ambrose should be destroyed; Cyprian, Jerome, and Augustine should be suppressed; no one should touch the Greek exegetes, who[156] are in fact read in translation by the universities and the churches of Christendom. And, by the same reasoning, it will be considered criminal to issue the New and the Old Testament in Greek, as the

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152 many articles are laid down] Added in *1527*

153 For Juvencus see *Apologia* n55. Allen Ep 456 85n reports that Juvencus' version of the Acts was published first in Deventer about 1490 and was reprinted frequently thereafter. In Ep 456:93–7 Erasmus appeals similarly to precedents in the paraphrasing of Scripture.

154 This is one of Erasmus' most important lines of defence; cf *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 33: 'Nor do I offer anything but what can be found in the books of the Greeks, correct or not. I offer this for discussion, not for adoption.' Though Erasmus appealed to the Greek text as authoritative, he was aware that the Greek text had its own problems. In response to critics, he stressed that his own Latin translation merely informed the reader on the Greek, without necessarily reflecting his own text-critical choices. The dichotomy between the text he printed and the text he preferred can be seen in his annotations, for striking examples of which see the annotations on 1 Tim 3:16 (*quod manifestum est in carne*), on James 4:2 (*occiditis et zelatis*), and on 1 John 5:7–8 (*tres sunt qui testimonium dant in caelo*). In some cases the difference between text printed and text preferred, as indicated in an annotation, may have been due to the accidents of production. For a fuller discussion of the Greek text in Erasmus' New Testament see 'New Testament Scholarship' 43–5 with nn192–7. See further Krans *Conjectural Critics* 19 n33.

155 and … doctrine.] Added in *1527*

156 who … Christendom.] Added in *1527*

press of my friend Aldo recently did[157] and as Francisco,[158] the archbishop of Toledo, accomplished with the approval of the Roman pontiff, who supplied him with a copy of the New Testament with which my edition agrees almost completely.[159]

**[58]** I certainly did not undertake this task to provide a standard from which it would not be permissible to diverge, but I undertook it to make a substantial contribution both to the correction and to the understanding of the sacred books. That was what I proposed to do, and Leo X, a truly supreme pontiff, approved of it through a personal writing, eager in this area also to provide for the good of the Christian religion.[160] I know[161] that in this matter the authority of the Roman pontiff is not much respected, though they want it to be considered sacrosanct whenever he issues to eager pastors documents granting the right to absolve or to perform some other function that brings in a harvest not to be sneezed at, or[162] the right to hold multiple benefices. But his favour to me ought to have been valued all the more because the pope's indulgence in these other matters is sometimes bought or forcibly extracted

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157 On Aldo Manuzio and the Aldine edition see *Apologia* n34, where CWE 72 33 n167 is cited, the note indicating that the Aldine edition was not entirely a reprint of Erasmus' New Testament. The question remains open, however. While there are differences between Erasmus' New Testament text and that of the Aldine edition, there are, on the other hand, many particular or even strange readings in Erasmus' 1516 edition that are clearly carried over unchanged in the Aldine edition, the best-known example of which are the final verses of Revelation (Rev 22:16–21); in the case of these verses, the Aldine edition simply reproduces the Erasmian text. Thus for the most part the Aldine edition reproduced the Greek text of Erasmus' first edition, with a few corrections and alterations.

158 and as Francisco … completely.] Added in *1527*. For Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros and the Complutensian Polyglot Bible see *Apologia* n34 and paragraph 110b n298 below.

159 The Vatican supplied the Spanish scholars with manuscripts from the papal library, but the Complutensian text, like that of Erasmus, was based on manuscripts belonging to the Byzantine tradition, hence the agreement; cf paragraph 41a with nn123, 124.

160 A reference to Pope Leo's letter of support (1519), Ep 864 ('Prefaces and Letters' 772–3). For Erasmus' strenuous efforts to obtain papal support and approval see 'New Testament Scholarship' 113–14. For the document signed see Ep 865:42.

161 I know … not to be sneezed at] Added in *1522*

162 or … task.] Added in *1527*. Erasmus himself was the recipient of a papal dispensation permitting him to hold more than one benefice; cf Epp 517 introduction, 518, 519; also 'New Testament Scholarship' 86 with n349.

from him. In my case, his favour was freely bestowed, and it was granted not so much to a person as to a task.

**[Criticism of Revered Authorities Evokes Hostility, 59–63]**

**[59]** I have removed many errors; I have explained many passages badly translated; I have eliminated many outrageous solecisms; I have unravelled many knots that baffled even the ancient exegetes; I have pointed out many extraordinary lapses in writers; I have eliminated many ambiguities; I have reordered many transpositions;[163] (to come to an end) I have often illuminated the meaning of passages that before were obscure or cloudy; I have freely conferred much that is useful; and yet some people scream at me, though they are in my debt. If[164] there is the slightest error, they raise tidal waves of protest (as they say).[165] Benefits bestowed earn no gratitude.

**[60]** It is no secret to me that some are upset because I disagree with writers of great renown. The followers of Augustine growl[166] if I do not agree with him on every point. Those who are attached to Thomas grieve if I criticize him. The Franciscans[167] do not want Lyra or Scotus to be refuted. But if we accept this rule, it will not be allowable to disagree with anyone at all, even though these very authors disagree among themselves. In such an endeavour one should be concerned more for truth than for authority.

**[61]** It is not shameful to disagree with any authority, however highly esteemed, as long as you give good reasons for doing so – with this difference: one may disagree with authorities such as Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine, but with reverence; others do not deserve such reverence. Perhaps Thomas does, but Lyra and Hugh of St Cher do not,[168] on the grounds either of learning or holiness. And it was important to criticize them in some places because

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163 'Transpositions': *hyperbata*; cf eg the annotations on Rom 1:4 ('from the resurrection of the dead of Jesus Christ') CWE 56 19–24 with n21 and on 1 Cor 9:10 (*et qui triturat*); cf also *Ratio* 648 with n835 and the reference there to CWE 56 General Index.

164 If … gratitude.] Added in *1535*

165 Cf *Adagia* IV iv 73.

166 growl] First in *1527*; previously, 'gnash their teeth'

167 Franciscans] First in *1527*; previously, 'Minorites'

168 For Erasmus' opinion of Nicholas of Lyra and Hugh of St Cher see 'New Testament Scholarship' 82–3 with n336. Capito believed the 'industrious reader' would share Erasmus' opinion; cf Ep 459:78–82 with 81n. It should be noted, however, that in 1501 Erasmus begged a friend to send him a copy of Nicholas

I saw that everywhere they were the only ones read, and that with marvellous confidence but no good judgment.

**[62]** Perhaps in one or two places I do make fun of them. First of all, they should be blamed for writing absurdities, not I for ridiculing them. And then if they are angry because I sometimes criticize such writers, why do they not acknowledge my courtesy even more when I turn a blind eye to many faults?[169] I would never have passed over such places if I criticized them out of self-indulgence. I have criticized them sometimes because I was forced to do so in order to promote research; that I do so very rarely springs from Christian self-restraint.

**[62a]** In fact,[170] I would have overlooked such errors also if they had allowed me to do so; but they scream that this effort is completely pointless, as merely elementary and grammatical. Now in fact it cannot be scorned as merely elementary since it points out mistakes made by the greatest Doctors.[171]

**[63]** But if I am not mistaken, most are offended because they are being instructed as if they were ignorant up to now about some feature of the writings they profess to understand; and they are ashamed to confess as old men

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of Lyra in his preparation for a commentary on Paul; cf Ep 165:8–14 with n13. Compare the treatment afforded Lyra and Hugh here and in the next paragraph with the treatment given them in *Apologia* 474 with n93.

169 Erasmus'scorn of such medieval commentators as Hugh and Lyra sometimes took the form of ridicule: 'Who would not laugh at such exegetical nonsense!' Cf eg the annotations on Luke 22:36 (*sed nunc qui habet sacculum*) ASD VI-5 584:703–5, on Rom 16:25 ('was sent from Corinth' [VG omitted]), and on 1 Tim 5:10 (*si omne opus bonum subsequuta est*) where Erasmus invites the laughter-loving to read Hugh's fine comments. In the annotation on 1 Pet 3:7 (*honorem impartientes*) Erasmus expresses his reluctance to record the embarrassing interpretations of exegetes like Lyra, and says that he would rage against them if Christian modesty did not restrain him, a comment he eliminated in *1527*; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 83 with n336. Frans Titelmans in 1529 may well represent the general tone of criticism levelled at such statements in his response to the annotation on Rom 16:25, a response Erasmus recorded in his *Responsio ad Collationes*: Erasmus' mockery was an unforgivable sin – laughter, cynicism, bitterness, things too horrible to repeat, all said against a man (Lyra) who now reigns in heaven with angels and apostles, contemplating the face of God! Cf the annotation (the cue phrase is marked 'omitted'), CWE 56 436–7 with n12.

170 In fact … Doctors.] This paragraph was added in *1527*.

171 Erasmus never tires of pointing to the mistakes of the great Doctors of the church. Cf paragraphs 14, 34 with n109, and the reference there to paragraph 27h. Cf also the title 'Obscure Passages Where Translators of Great Renown Have Gone Astray' in 'Errors in the Vulgate' 885.

that they must discard what they learned as young students. First of all, it is excessively arrogant to profess that there is nothing one does not know.[172] Second, they should quietly learn such things also, and then they will cease to be ignorant. That is the best way for them to escape such humiliation. As[173] it is, by such outcries they betray their ignorance all the more.

**[Novelty Evokes Criticism, 64–6]**

**[64]** If novelty is so objectionable that it cannot be tolerated, the version we now use was also once new. And it is utterly stupid to judge things by the passage of years.[174] By that standard, drunkenness would be outstanding because it is very ancient and has been passed down from the earliest period to our own times. In fact, do we not consider the thing itself rather than its history through the ages?

**[65]** If novelty is offensive, I am restoring the old and banishing the new.[175] For the corruption was later than the translation itself. If some cannot change a prejudice they drank in with their mother's milk,[176] the old version remains available to them, clearer and more correct if they wish; otherwise, it remains for them unchanged and the same as it always was.[177] If their palate[178] obstinately finds pleasure in acorns, let them at least not cast an evil eye on those who prefer to eat wheat.

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172 See Ep 843:340–4 for men ashamed to confess ignorance; and compare Erasmus' humble admission in *Apologia* 459 with n20 that he knows nothing.

173 As … more.] Added in *1527*

174 For identical ideas and closely similar statements see *Apologia* 467 with n60.

175 Erasmus characteristically explicates his New Testament project as a 'restoration of the old' rather than a novel endeavour: 'It is not as though I undermine the modern texts; I restore the old one to the utmost of my power, but in such a way as not to weaken their new one,' Ep 456:86–8. To Nicolaas Baechem, who bitterly resented Erasmus' New Testament as a novelty, Erasmus replied, 'All I do is to restore the old; I put forward nothing new,' Ep 1153:209. On Erasmus' New Testament as 'restoration' see 'New Testament Scholarship' 40 with n182.

176 Cf *Adagia* II iv 19.

177 Cf *Apologia* 466: 'For those who are fond of the Vulgate, their edition is still available for them to use … by my revision [it is] rendered clearer, purer, and more accurate.' Cf ibidem n59.

178 their palate] Added in *1527*; the passage previously read, 'if they obstinately find pleasure.' For the image of taste cf *Apologia* n77, where a similar image is noted in Jerome's preface to the Gospels.

**[66]** I ask them, is it right or not to investigate something after the ancients have done so? If it is not, why did Alexander [of Hales] and Thomas and many more[179] after them dare to change the whole complexion of theology? If it is right, why do they snarl at my pursuits, especially since what I present does not dictate what anyone must think and is supported by the authority of the ancients? And indeed, if it is right to introduce something new, it is all the more right to recall what is old.

**[The Authority of the Manuscripts, Especially the Greek Manuscripts, 67–79c]**

**[67]** If I had done no more than correct our manuscripts using Greek copies, they should have commended the industry with which I was trying to do what Augustine commands in more than one place. As it is, I am not content to do only this; I also seek out material from the commentaries of orthodox exegetes.

**[68]** If we grant that there are no errors in our manuscripts, still there are many reasons why we should have recourse to the sources, because of ambiguities, some obscure translations, or figurative language[180] and the nuances of Greek expressions, which often cannot be rendered directly because the charm of the phrasing is lost in translation.[181]

**[69]** If we grant that the Greek, as well as the Latin, manuscripts were corrupted, still the true reading is often discovered by collating equally corrupt copies, because it happens often that what was accidently corrupted in one manuscript is found intact in another, or[182] at least certain traces make it possible to guess at the true reading.

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179 For Alexander of Hales 'and many more' see *Paraclesis* n83. For Erasmus' criticism of the medieval doctors as representing an unwelcome novelty in intellectual modalities see eg *Antibarbari* CWE 23 67 with 14n and *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* CWE 84 78 with nn385–8.

180 or figurative language] Added in *1527*

181 Cf *Ratio* 498 with n45, where Erasmus observes that it is only in the original text of Scripture that one can discover its full grace and depth of meaning. In the latter part of the *Ratio* Erasmus discusses at length figurative language (*tropi*), ambiguity (*amphibologiae*), and nuances (*emphases*); cf especially 648–61. For identification of these in the *Annotations on Romans* see CWE 56 General Index svv 'ambiguity,' 'figures of speech,' and 'emphasis' under 'rhetoric.'

182 or … reading.] Added in *1535*; the addition indirectly shows Erasmus' growing awareness that the establishment of the Greek text is not as straightforward as he would have liked.

**[70]** Augustine (in his fifty-ninth epistle), when asked about the meaning of a certain verse from the Psalms, does not dare to respond without consulting the Greek manuscripts.[183] He also compares the books of the Old and New Testament with the Greek, precisely because he did not have confidence in the Vulgate translation.[184] What value this has for the Old Testament let others decide; certainly it is necessary for the New. And do some people[185] never hesitate to make pronouncements about everything by relying on the Vulgate manuscripts? Augustine[186] teaches in many places that the genuine reading must be sought in a more ancient language, that is, in the language into which the book was first translated. Thus, if there is a problem in the Old Testament, he directs someone who does not know Hebrew to consult the Greek manuscripts because the Old Testament was translated into that language before it was translated into Latin.

**[71]** Jerome praises the efforts of some German women who compared the Latin Psalter with the Greek, though the Psalter derives from Hebrew sources.[187] And do these people[188] think it is absurd to do the same for the New Testament, which comes down to us totally, or almost totally, in Greek?

**[72]** But I hear that some have no confidence whatever in the Greek manuscripts after they withdrew from the Roman church. But by the same token we should have no confidence in the manuscripts of the Jews because they are utterly hostile not only to the Roman pontiff but also to Christ and all Christians. And yet Jerome had confidence in those Jewish manuscripts,

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183 Augustine Ep 149.1.3

184 Perhaps a reference to such books as the *In Heptateuchum quaestiones* (cf I *proemium*); cf also *Ratio* 647 with n828; also Fitzgerald *Augustine* 101, where it is cautiously conceded only 'that he [Augustine] occasionally cited a Greek word or phrase to help elucidate a passage.' 'Vulgate translation' in this case is, presumably, a reference to the Old Latin translation circulating in Africa; cf paragraph 84 with n228.

185 some people] First in *1527*; previously, 'we'

186 Augustine … Latin.] Added in *1522*. On Augustine's esteem for the Septuagint cf his Ep 71.34.2; and paragraph 33 with n105. On Erasmus' esteem for the Septuagint cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 344 with n1482.

187 A reference to Sunnia and Fretela to whom Jerome addressed a letter on the state of the Septuagint Psalter; cf Jerome Ep 106. Erasmus regards these women as Germans; cf paragraph 84 with n237.

188 these people] First in *1527*; previously, 'we.' 'The New Testament … almost totally, in Greek': Some people held the view that the Gospel of Matthew and the Epistle to the Hebrews were originally written in Hebrew.

and that at a time when it would have been most opportune to corrupt them if they had any desire to do so.

**[73]** If the Greeks had any desire to corrupt their manuscripts, they would have done so most of all in places where they disagree with us, such as the procession of the Spirit, the equality[189] of the three Persons in the Trinity, the primacy of the Roman pontiff, baptismal rites, and the manner of consecrating and distributing the Eucharist, the marriage of priests, and any other matters like these. But on such points they agree with us. And no passage can be effectively[190] brought forth that can be considered suspect for that reason.[191]

**[74]** Aristotle has his authority among us although he is more than schismatic; in fact, he is most alien to Christianity. Averroës[192] carries weight in the school of the theologians, though he is a blasphemer against Christ.[193]

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189 the equality … marriage of priests] Added in *1535*. The Eastern church said that the Holy Spirit proceeds 'from the Father,' the Western church that the Holy Spirit proceeds 'from the Father and the Son'; the Eastern Trinitarian formula was 'one essence, three hypostases,' the Western formula, 'one substance, three persons'; for the distinction between Eastern and Western liturgies see Ferguson *Early Christianity* II 683–7.

190 effectively] Added in *1527*

191 Even before the *Novum instrumentum* was published, Maarten van Dorp had expressed his mistrust of Greek manuscripts, to which Erasmus addressed a response anticipating almost point for point his response here to 'crabby critics'; cf Epp 304:101–31 and 337:782–805. Erasmus offered an even fuller response to the anonymous critic of Ep 843 and repeats here his most telling argument: 'If, however … he contends that the Greeks did manipulate their texts, at least the passages they corrupted were those which appeared to undermine their schismatic opinions. Then let him produce one single passage which can be suspect on those grounds,' Ep 843:428–31. Thus, in the preceding sentence, 'they agree with us' intends to say that the Greek manuscripts agree with the Vulgate.

192 Averroës … Christ.] Added in *1527*

193 It is not unusual for Erasmus to speak of Aristotle together with Averroës, whose commentaries on Aristotle deeply affected the universities of medieval Europe; cf eg *Paraclesis* 414 and *Methodus* 438 with n54, a passage repeated in the *Ratio*, where for the 'ungodly Averroës' see 513. Erasmus commonly spoke of Aristotle in pejorative terms, since he regarded scholastic teaching and methodology to be derived from the philosophy of Aristotle and thus essentially hostile to the 'Christian philosophy' he advocated. This opposition between the two philosophies is expressed from an early point, eg in *Moria* (1514 addition) CWE 27 128; the letter to Dorp (1515), Ep 337:416–53; in the passages just cited from the *Paraclesis, Methodus*, and *Ratio* (1518/19); and in a *1519* addition to the annotation on Matt 5:12 (*omne malum*): 'Why are the teachings

And will we have no confidence in the Greek volumes because[194] some of the Greeks have cut themselves off from the Roman pontiff? – for not all of them have done so. And both those who have and those who have not have the same readings.[195]

**[75]** If the Greek manuscripts were corrupted long ago, it was while the Greeks were still orthodox. If it was done shortly after the schism, how does it happen that their manuscripts agree with those of the ancients – unless someone should be so outrageous as to say that all the manuscripts and all the commentaries of the exegetes were corrupted by the schismatics at one fell swoop.

**[76]** Rather I suspect that if anything was changed[196] in the Greek manuscripts, the changes were made from Latin copies after the Latin church began to absorb the Greeks.

**[77]** Nor was all of Greece divided from us: Rhodes and[197] Crete acknowledge Christ, and they acknowledge the Roman pontiff. Why do we distrust their manuscripts? And most of our copies come from them.[198]

**[78]** Jerome once ridiculed Helvidius who had got into his head the stupid notion that the Greek manuscripts were corrupt.[199] Jerome thought this statement was so stupid it did not deserve to be refuted by any arguments. And yet at that very time almost the whole Orient was boiling over with the

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of Aristotle more compelling than those of Christ?' ASD VI-5 134:592–3. Cf Ep 337:435: 'What can Christ have in common with Aristotle?' But Erasmus does express appreciation for the works of Aristotle as an educational tool, a propaedeutic to the study of Scripture; cf eg *Ratio* 503 with n69.

194 because … readings.] Added in *1527*

195 For the Latin See in Rhodes and the 'Rhodian manuscript' see n198 below.

196 changed] First in *1535*; previously, 'corrupted'

197 Rhodes and] Added in *1527*

198 Crete was a Venetian colony since 1212; at Rhodes, the Knights Hospitaller marked the influence of the papacy in the Aegean Sea, though only until 1522; it is therefore somewhat strange that Erasmus added the reference to Rhodes in *1527*. Perhaps Erasmus wished to accommodate a reference to the Greek manuscript of the Pauline and Catholic Epistles sent from Rhodes to Cardinal Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, and cited by López Zúñiga; cf ASD IX-2 147:723n and 252:447–50 with 449n. For the Latin see in Rhodes see ASD IX-2 247:345n.

199 Cf Jerome *Adversus Helvidium* 16: '… and do not turn the diversity of the copies into a pretext, for you convinced yourself ridiculously that the Greek manuscripts were falsified'; also ibidem 8: '… even though you hold, through remarkable impudence, that these words were falsified in the Greek manuscripts.'

heresies of the Arians and the Origenists. There was reason to be more afraid of their copies than those of the schismatics.

**[79]** The church condemned certain opinions of the Greeks; it never condemned the manuscripts of the Greeks. And why do we condemn what the church did not condemn? Indeed, why do we not have confidence in the manuscripts in which the church wanted us to confide?

**[79a]** There are[200] those who say that after the acceptance of Jerome's translation there should be no reliance on either the Greek or Hebrew manuscripts, and that Augustine's opinion that the true meaning of the New Testament should be sought out in the Greek and the meaning of the Old Testament in the Hebrew was no longer valid.[201] If the Greek codices are the same, why are they rejected today, since they once had authority, and I have shown that in most places they agree with ours? And then, if what Augustine wrote was no longer valid after the acceptance of Jerome's translation, why did the church accept that same rule in papal decrees so many centuries after Augustine?[202] If we give weight to that judgment from the time of Gratian, Jerome's translation was already completely accepted at that time.

**[79b]** I pass over in silence the fact that the learned gather from many conjectures that we do not have either the Old Testament or the New in a pure form as derived from either the translation or the emendation[203] of Jerome.[204] First of all, his Psalter, translated from the Hebrew, was never accepted by the church. That Ecclesiastes is not the translation of Jerome is clear from the

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200 There are … wrangling.] Paragraphs 79a, b, and c were added in *1527*.

201 Cf paragraph 70 with n186. For the importance of Greek for Augustine see further *De doctrina christiana* 2.11.16 and 2.15.22, where Augustine attributes extensive authority to the Septuagint; cf *De doctrina christiana* 3.3.7, where he refers to the Greek text of the Old Testament in order to resolve an ambiguity in the Latin. In *De civitate Dei* 18.44 Augustine explicitly attributes authority to both the Hebrew and the Greek of the Old Testament.

202 'That same rule,' ie that translations should be checked against the original languages. Cf Ep 373:14–20 ('Prefaces and Letters' 783 with n3). For Augustine cited in Gratian cf Ep 182:191–4 with n193; and for Gratian's *Decretum*, Ep 1579:17 with n2.

203 or the emendation] Added in *1535*. The omission in *1527* seems to be due to a printer's error.

204 Erasmus frequently reiterates his claim that the Vulgate is not really or entirely Jerome's translation; cf paragraph 54 and Ep 843:21–7.

preface he prefixed to his commentary.[205] Finally, the manuscripts we have that follow the Septuagint translation and those that follow the actual text of the Hebrew differ from each other in striking ways.

**[79c]** At this point some people hand over to us a Lesbian ruler,[206] maintaining that what is most widely accepted is to be considered right.[207] But affairs were never so well disposed that the masses sought out what is best. The most certain rule is to compare with each other languages, translations, explanations, copies, and to do so with sober judgment and without wrangling.

**[Justification of the Philological Method in the Study of Scripture, 80–4]**

**[80]** Now, the fact that some scorn my efforts as lowly and elementary because my labours concern syllables and words does not disturb me very much. As for me, I consider whatever concerns the subject matter of theology to be great. And since I was not unaware of how much reverence is due to Sacred Scripture, I deliberately chose what might seem most lowly in that profession.[208]

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205 Cf Jerome *Commentarius in Ecclesiasten*, *praefatio*: '… I followed no authority; translating from the Hebrew, I rather adopted the Septuagint tradition, but only as far as it does not differ much from the Hebrew.' Jerome wrote his commentary on Ecclesiastes about AD 389, at a time when he was beginning to make translations of the Old Testament following the Septuagint translation but using also Origen's *Hexapla*, which provided translations from the Hebrew, as well as from the Septuagint, and in addition translations by Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. Jerome later made translations of the books of the Old Testament (including Ecclesiastes) from the Hebrew, translations that became the Vulgate and clearly differed from his earlier translations.

206 Cf paragraph 41a n122.

207 The argument appeared in various forms; cf eg Ep 304:109–11 with Erasmus' response, Ep 337:754–77; also Ep 843:459–71.

208 From the first edition Erasmus presented his work on the New Testament as labours concerned with minutiae – textual criticism, grammar, and syntax. The defence of these labours constituted a major part of the 1515 prefatory letter to his annotations; cf Ep 373:84–149 ('Prefaces and Letters' 785–8), a point he made again in *Apologia*; cf 473 with n91. Erasmus intended by this defence an implicit contrast between theology and philology; cf *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 48 with n240: 'No one has ever claimed a smaller share in theology than I, who have chosen for myself the lowliest part of all, that is grammar, and have left more sublime matters to more talented men'; also *Responsio ad annotationes Lei* 2 (Note 209): '… I do not claim for myself competence to treat

**[81]** Let them call it grammatical, elementary, trivial, as long as they confess it is necessary. Even though I should teach nothing more than the correct reading, still it is shameful for great doctors not to know even that much. And yet this is too obvious to be denied, since in this matter Augustine is caught making mistakes, and also Bede,[209] also Thomas, also Lyra and Hugh of St Cher,[210] and since we frequently hear preachers in church who do not understand so much as the text they propose for their sermons.[211]

**[82]** These are minute details, but it often happens that 'those who look down on the sun'[212] come a cropper in such matters. If according to Chrysostom and Augustine the presence or omission of the article *ὁ*, a very tiny element, can determine whether a meaning is orthodox or heretical,[213] if a misplaced punctuation mark can do the same, what reason is there for us to neglect tiny elements that can have such a momentous effect?

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the mysteries, but I deal with the lowliest of subjects …' CWE 72 316. Reuchlin took a similar position; see Werner Schwarz *Principles and Problems of Biblical Translation: Some Reformation Controversies and Their Background* (Cambridge 1955) 78.

209 and also Bede] Added in *1527*

210 For the shameful mistakes of great exegetes see paragraph 62a with n171 and *Apologia* n91.

211 Cf the annotation on 1 Pet 4:7 (*et vigilate*), where Erasmus records that he was publicly accused of denying that preachers understood their text.

212 'Those who look down on the sun': *οἱ τὸν ἥλιον ὑπερφρονοῦντες*. It is unclear from where this expression is taken; cf Gregory of Nazianzus *De vita sua* 1803, where the word *ἡλιοφρόνων* occurs, though in a somewhat different sense: for the meaning, 'thinking in an eastern way' see *Gregory of Nazianzus Autobiographical Poems* trans and ed Caroline White (Cambridge 1996) 143. The most likely source is Aristophanes *Clouds* 225–6, where Socrates says, *ἀεροβατῶ καὶ περιφρονῶ τὸν ἥλιον* 'I am walking the air and speculating about the sun,' and Strepsiades responds, *ἔπειτ' ἀπὸ ταρροῦ τοὺς θεοὺς ὑπερφρονεῖς* 'Thus it is from a basket that you look down upon the gods.' Cf *Ratio* 697 with n1082.

213 Cf Ep 373:138–40 ('Prefaces and Letters' 787), where Cyril is given credit for the remark; cf 787 n30. But cf the annotation on John 1:1 (*erat verbum*), where, from *1516*, both Chrysostom and Cyril are cited, ASD VI-6 38:170–4; also ASD VI-5 58:116–18n (a note with reference to the text of Ep 373), where it is said that Chrysostom points 'casually' to the article, Cyril 'amply.' In the annotation, Erasmus argued that the article in John 1:1 had the force of denoting the one unique 'Word' who was always with God, which excluded the view that denied Christ to be the eternal Word. The misplaced punctuation mark may refer to Augustine's comments on John 1:1; cf *Apologia* 475 with n101.

**[82a]** Because[214] in some places I point out the syntax and straighten out an involuted word order, they scream, 'Grammarian!'[215] One of them said, even in a very large assembly, 'He teaches how to construe. I learned this forty years ago,'[216] as if Origen (in my opinion hardly second to anyone)[217] did not often elucidate Scripture by explaining the construction and pointing out the word order,[218] as if Jerome did not do the same. And the very one who shouted these things at me has the greatest need of someone to explain the construction.

**[82b]** They may be very learned, I do not deny it. Still, I think that a person should not be placed lowest in the class[219] if in so many places he teaches the learned what it was their business to know, the ignorance of which rendered them both shameful and useless.[220]

**[82c]** Does not Augustine, whom these people also consider to be the supreme Doctor of the church, distinguish *percunctatio* 'questioning' from

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214 Because … given.] Paragraphs 82a–i were added in *1527* with a few minor changes in *1535*.

215 'Grammarian': Latin *grammatista*, which carried the nuance of 'elementary schoolteacher' and differed from the *grammaticus*, which referred to the more scholarly 'philologist.'

216 The story appears elsewhere; cf *Ratio* 648 with n837.

217 hardly second to anyone] First in *1535*; in *1527*, 'second to none.' Erasmus had no hesitation to express his preference for Origen; cf Ep 844:273–4 (1518), where he claimed to learn more Christian philosophy from one page of Origen than from ten of Augustine. In 1527 he affirmed that among early interpreters of Scripture 'pride of place is given to the Greek writer Origen,' who 'has no rival,' Ep 1844:19–20, 48–9. In the *Ratio*, Erasmus avers that Origen did for Scripture 'exactly what Donatus [did] for the comedies of Terence,' ie treated them philologically; 509 with n97.

218 and pointing out the word order] Added in *1535*

219 'Should not be placed lowest in the class': Literally, 'should not be numbered among the Megarians' (Megarians were proverbially lowest in rank). Cf *Adagia* II i 79 and III vi 28.

220 both shameful and useless] First in *1535*; in *1527*, 'dishonourable'

*interrogatio* 'inquiring';[221] did he not point out punctuation;[222] does he not arrange *cola*, *commata*, and periods;[223] does he not point out the grammarians' figures of speech?[224]

**[82d]** Do we not laugh at stargazers[225] who look upward to contemplate the heavenly bodies so intently that they bang their shins on a rock?

**[82e]** Apelles did not scorn the method of grinding or mixing colours, or of sketching line drawings, though these are the low steps in the art in which he excelled.[226]

**[82f]** Though a skilled architect may be concerned about the roof and finishing touches of a building, he does not neglect to amass gravel for the foundation. If someone does not know this, he is not an architect; if he neglects to do it, he is erecting a building that will collapse.

**[82g]** But they say, 'It is shameful for doctors to learn such things.' I grant it: they should not learn – they should have learned them. But what will you do with those who happen not to have done so, either because they lacked the desire or because they did not happen to have the opportunity to learn them? Is it better not to know what it is necessary to know or to learn it late?

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221 Cf Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 3.3.6. *Percontatio* is an open question, asking for information; *interrogatio* is used by Augustine as a technical term for a question that is answered by either 'yes' or 'no.' Such a distinction between *interrogare* and *percontari* is made by Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 9.2.6. Augustine's distinction is recognized in the annotation on Rom 8:33 ('who will make accusation against the elect of God').

222 'Punctuation': Latin *hypostigma*. This term is not used by Augustine; Erasmus probably refers to the matters of punctuation (*distinctio*) addressed by Augustine in *De doctrina christiana* 3.2.2–5.

223 Respectively, clauses, phrases, and longer sentences. Cf Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 4.7.11 and the annotation on Rom 12:21 ('do not be overcome by evil').

224 For figures of speech (*tropi*) see Augustine *De doctrina christiana* 3.29.40–1.

225 'Stargazers': Greek *μετέωροι*, an expression applied with some contempt in classical Greek literature to philosophers; cf eg Plato *Apology* 18B and Aristophanes *Clouds* 360.

226 For Apelles, the famous Greek painter, see *De recta pronuntiatione* CWE 26 398–9 with n14, where Pliny (*Naturalis historia* 35.79–97) is cited as Erasmus' source of information. Some editions of Erasmus' New Testament refer to Apelles on the title page; cf Introductory Note to 'Title Pages' 741 with nn4 and 5, 'Title Page of the *Annotations* 1519' 755 with n1, and the illustration, 754.

**[82h]** And yet no one is forced to learn such things; but no one is barred from doing so. Certainly this is a task to which young people especially must apply strenuous efforts.[227]

**[82i]** I have no doubt that there will come a time (perhaps it is already dawning) when such efforts will largely seem superfluous. But those who have already grown up into big, sturdy men do not spurn the nurse who first gave them her breast, who put prechewed food into their mouths. And those wise luminaries of Greece, consummate though they were in all disciplines, were not ungrateful to those from whom they learned to identify, shape, and sound out the alphabet. These things are tiny in such a way that no one becomes huge without them. Everyone has his own gifts. I share what I have been given.

**[83]** But in fact it will seem all the more clear that such matters should not be neglected if anyone puts to the test how much labour they require or if someone undertakes to handle Holy Scripture and to investigate single details in it with the painstaking care they deserve. What is useful is perceived by continuous application, not by a helter-skelter reading. Finally, a person will cease to feel contempt if he considers not one or two annotations but the whole enterprise. At your ease and at leisure you pass judgment on me about this or that passage, and you think you could have handled it with considerably more amplitude and learning. I could have done so too if I had had to analyse only ten places. But to provide the proper diligence in many thousands of places is very difficult indeed; at least it was so for me. I will not begrudge it if someone has a happier lot.

**[84]** Augustine did not regret his efforts, even though he annotated certain things of this sort not from the Hebrew sources but from the Greek volumes. He considered it worthy of annotation that a plural verb is used with a singular noun signifying something that consists of many elements. For example, 'Let my people go so that they may serve me' [Exodus 8:1]. Likewise, 'Let all the earth adore you' [Psalm 66:4].[228] Moreover, in the sen-

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227 Cf *Ratio* 499–500 where Erasmus acknowledges the advantage of youth in learning languages but does not entirely excuse the elderly.

228 The examples that follow from the Old Testament in this paragraph are taken from Augustine's *In Heptateuchum locutiones*, where, as Augustine explains in a very brief preface, the Latin reflects the influence of Greek and Hebrew idioms. Augustine's comments presuppose an Old Latin translation of Scripture, not the Vulgate. In the first example given here from Exod 8:1, the Latin that Augustine cites has the same grammatical form as the text in the Greek Septuagint, ie a noun in the singular ('people') becomes subject of a verb in the plural ('serve').

tence 'If Esau questions you, saying, "To whom do you belong and where are you going and to whom do these things that go before you belong," and you will say, "To my servant Jacob"' [Genesis 32:17–18] he notes that the 'and' in the last clause is redundant,[229] and furthermore that in the locution 'But you will keep my covenant ' [Genesis 17:9] 'will keep' is used for the imperative 'keep.'[230] Then again, he thinks that these words in Leviticus [13:46] *ἀκάθαρτος ὤν, ἀκάθαρτος ἔσται* can be translated in this way: 'Existing as unclean, he will be unclean'; and yet he thinks the participle translated 'existing' does not come from 'to exist' but from 'to be,' since the Greek is *ὤν*, as if one should say 'be-ing.'[231] Moreover he explains that a girl who is a virgin is called a woman, since he does not know the Hebrew word on which the question depends.[232] And he says that the Greek *ὄψιμον* [tardy] is not well translated

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Augustine had illustrated the point by reference to Ps 66 (VG 65):4 ('All the earth worships you' NRSV), where the grammatical construction found in the Septuagint (singular subject, plural verb) is adopted in the Latin, but incorrectly. Cf Augustine *In Heptateuchum locutiones* on Exod 8:1.

229 Cf Augustine *In Heptateuchum locutiones* on Gen 32:17–18. Erasmus refers to a Latin text that reads as the Septuagint by adding 'and' inappropriately: 'If Esau asks you … and you will say' for 'If Esau asks you … you will say.' This construction is common in the Septuagint.

230 Cf Augustine *In Heptateuchum locutiones* on Gen 17:9.

231 Erasmus paraphrases Augustine's remarks in *In Heptateuchum locutiones* on Lev 13:46, where Augustine says: 'Also, not far below [ie in verse 46], he says: "If he is unclean, he will be unclean"; this cannot be rendered into Latin from the Greek as it is expressed there. For the Greek has: *ἀκάθαρτος ὤν, ἀκάθαρτος ἔσται*, as if to say "existing [or appearing] as unclean, he will be unclean." But the Greek *ὤν* is not *existens* [existing] but, if this could be said, "be-ing" from *esse* [to be], not *existere* [to exist],' ie Augustine thinks the sense of the Greek is, 'Existing [ie 'while he remains'; cf NRSV] unclean, he is unclean.' However, *existere* is not a proper Latin equivalent to the Greek participle used here; in fact, to have a proper equivalent one would have to coin a participle from the Latin verb *esse*, *essens* 'be-ing' (or, to suggest the awkwardness, 'is-ing').

232 Cf Augustine *In Hepatateuchum locutiones* on Num 30:3, where Augustine comments that Moses 'calls a female a "woman," even if she is a virgin, in the way the Scriptures do; hence also of Christ, as the Apostle says: "born of a woman"' (Gal 4:4). The context, Num 30:1–5, clarifies: a young unmarried woman remains bound to a vow taken while still a virgin, providing her father knows of it and does not object. See the annotation on Matt 1:23 (*ecce virgo*) for Erasmus' discussion of the Hebrew for 'virgin' and 'woman.'

by the Latin *serotinum* [belated].[233] Such a great bishop deigned to descend to such elementary points. Did not Jerome himself annotate points that might seem frivolous? On Paul's words in the Epistle to the Ephesians, the fifth chapter, 'For this reason he will leave father and mother, etc' [5:31], he noted that the expression *ἀντὶ τούτου* is used for *ἕνεκεν τούτου*, since both expressions match each other and have the same meaning: 'Because of your wife you will leave father and mother' and 'For the sake of your wife you will leave father and mother.'[234] Likewise, in the Epistle to Philemon he pointed out that *ἀγαπητός* is better translated by 'lovable' than by 'beloved,' the Greek for which would be *ἠγαπημένος*.[235] Likewise commenting on the Epistle to the Romans, he notes that in *παντὶ τῷ ὄντι ἐν ὑμῖν* Paul says *omni* 'to everyone' instead of *omnibus* 'to all,' since one expression is equivalent to the other: 'to everyone who is among you' and 'to all who are among you.'[236] But then why should I mention the many annotations of this sort that Jerome made in the little book he wrote to Sunnia and Fretela about the correction of the Psalter?[237]

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233 Commenting on Deut 11:14 ('he will give … the early rain and the later rain' NRSV), where for 'later' Augustine's Latin text read *serotinum* 'belated,' Augustine writes in *In Heptateuchum locutiones* on Deut 11:14, '*Serotinum* [belated] is less good Latin. But he could not express more aptly what *ὄψιμον* means in Greek [as in the Septuagint text here]; but even in Latin it is common custom to use the term *serotinum* to express what is done later than it should have been.'

234 See Jerome's comment on the verse in *Commentarius in epistolam ad Ephesios* 3. Erasmus recalled Jerome on this point already in the *1516 Annotations* on 5:31 (*propter hoc relinquet*), and in *1519* beside the annotation was placed a marginal note, 'The annotation of Jerome – how trifling!'

235 Cf Jerome *Commentarius in epistolam ad Philemonem* on verse 1. In a *1519* addition to the annotation on the verse (*dilecto adiutori*) Erasmus reports Jerome's comment here; in a further addition in *1522* Erasmus adds: 'See what a trifling matter Jerome thought worthy of a note in a commentary that was complete and accurate!'

236 Cf Rom 12:3; and the annotation on the verse ('to all who are among you'), where the 'translator' of Origen's commentary, not Jerome, is credited with the statement.

237 See Jerome Ep 106, addressed to Sunnia and Fretela. Jerome identifies Sunnia and Fretela as Thracians (but cf paragraph 71 with n187), who had asked him to resolve differences between the Latin and the Greek translation of the Psalms by reference to the Hebrew text. It was an opportunity for Jerome to reiterate a fundamental principle of biblical exegesis, that wherever difficulties arise one should have recourse to the original language of the text of Scripture: Hebrew

Many[238] points there are so minute that I would not consider them worthy of my little annotations, however grammatical.

**[An Appeal for a Sympathetic Understanding, 85–109]**

**[85]** Therefore, if I live up to the task I have undertaken, let no one blame me. It is quite enough for me if none of my predecessors accomplished more than I in this kind of writing. What others can or will perform I do not know. Certainly I wish there were many who would throw me completely into the shade. Indeed, I would be delighted that I have been blamed if someone exerts his industry in promoting this holy endeavour, which I have attempted as best I could. But let there be no impudence, which even the pagans thought to be disgusting and unseemly when[239] they engaged in literary matters.

**[86]** Anyone who sets out to blame me should remember that he too is only human and that in criticizing he is no less capable of faults than the author was in writing.[240] In fact, someone who strives to do some good but in a huge work sometimes nods, not achieving what he wanted to do, is far more deserving of pardon than someone who wants to seem clever by hunting for something to carp at in someone else's book. And nevertheless he makes a botch even of that: while[241] he makes a to-do about the imaginary errors of others, he betrays his own real ones. Moreover,[242] no error is more disgusting than a mindset that reeks of envy and a craving to carp even at what is absolutely correct.

**[87]** A reader should approach a book the way a courteous guest is expected to approach a banquet. The host strives to satisfy everyone, but still if something should be served that does not comply with someone's taste, the guests[243] either courteously overlook the difficulty or even praise the dish, so as to avoid discomfiting the host. Who could put up with a guest who comes

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for the Old Testament, Greek for the New; cf Jerome Ep 106.2. The problems raised by this pair often involved minor variants, eg in Ps 8:3 whether we should read, 'Look at your heavens' or 'Look at the heavens,' Ep 106.7.

238 Many … grammatical.] The sentence was added in *1527*.

239 when … matters.] Added in *1535*

240 Cf the similar response Erasmus made to the 'inordinately angry' Lee, recorded in *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 8; and cf ibidem n34.

241 while … correct.] Added in *1527*

242 Moreover] First in *1535*; in *1527*, 'And yet'

243 the guests] Added in *1527*; previously, 'he,' ie the guest, implied in the verb. For the image see the letter of Oecolampadius in 'Prefaces and Letters' 774 with n3.

to a banquet with the sole intention of carping at what is served, not even eating, and not allowing others to do so.

**[88]** And yet you may find some even more rude who openly and endlessly condemn a work and rip it to shreds even though they have never read it.[244] And yet some people[245] do just that, professing to be teachers of Christian piety and pillars of religion, whereas in fact there is no greater swindle than to condemn what you do not know.

**[89]** They do not understand what a great difference there should be between the tongue of a prophetic dog, which heals sores by licking them,[246] and the tongue of a viper or asp, which injects immedicable poison. They do not know the difference between a religious authority and a swindling cheat.[247]

**[90]** Since the theological schools do not completely absolve from error Scotus or Peter Lombard or Ockham or Thomas or Augustine or Ambrose or Jerome or Hilary or Cyprian or Chrysostom or John Damascene or Origen[248] or even the apostle Peter – and indeed if you defend even that error, you are a heretic – why do they read my writings with such unfair prejudices?

**[91]** 'But to these great men,' they say, 'we owe such courtesy, but not to you.' Indeed, the more outstanding they were in either dignity or learning, the less pardon they deserve. And I do not think that even my critics place me among those who are so completely unlearned that they should not write anything at all.

**[92]** The word 'heresy' is very serious and hateful to Christian ears; all the more shameful it is, then, to hurl it recklessly at anyone. But these critics do nothing more readily, and they do not hesitate to cry, 'Heresy!' even

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244 Cf *Apologia* n7.

245 some people] Added in *1535*; previously, 'they' implied in the verb

246 Cf Luke 16:21.

247 'Religious authority' (*hierophantam*) and 'swindling cheat' (*sycophantam*); both words are transliterations from the Greek. As Erasmus observes in his annotation on Luke 3:14 (*calumniam faciatis*) the Greek verb *συκοφαντεῖν* means both 'to defraud' and 'to slander.' Thus in this context the image of 'swindling cheat' carries also the connotation of 'slanderer.'

248 The names, implicitly contrasting the medieval scholastics with the early Fathers, are generally common in Erasmus' work (cf eg Ep 396:99–102), but John Damascene is less usual. John of Damascus (c 650 or 675–c 749), originally serving in the caliph's court in Damascus, resigned his position and entered a monastery near Jerusalem. He is known especially for his defence of icons in the iconoclastic controversy, although he wrote extensively in defence of Orthodoxy as well.

before they look around to see what they are talking about.[249] And just as all the pigs grunt when one does, so too when one critic or another shouts, all his companions in the same faction cry out, 'Heresy!'[250]

[93] They want to appear thoroughly Christian when they are fiercely scornful of a fellow-Christian. And in order to do so with greater impunity,[251] they flatter the tyranny of princes, and they always fawn on the Roman pontiff, at the same time thinking the very worst of him as one to whose heart nothing is less dear than what pertains to the glory of Christ and the salvation of his flock. They[252] are always drumming out the name of the church when they are actually promoting their own interests. They always have the Holy Spirit on their lips, but quite another sort of spirit lodges in their hearts. I say[253] this not about all but about some who are not worthy of the name of theologian or monk.

**[94]** Someone who errs out of a lack of sophistication should be admonished in a brotherly spirit. Someone who has striven only to be helpful should be read with candour and good will. But it is amazing how they rage, with what pride and arrogance they play the censor,[254] frequently even when they do not understand the matter. For if I wanted to, I could show that this has actually happened. What could be more shameful?

**[95]** Against Celsus, Origen deploys arguments, not insults, though Celsus was not merely a heretic but a man who had torn the entire life of

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249 Cf the annotation on Acts 24:5 (*secundum sectam quam dicunt haeresim*), where in *1516* and again in a *1535* addition Erasmus notes the negative connotation in the sixteenth century of the word 'heresy' in contrast to its neutral sense in antiquity, when it came to denote a 'sect' or 'faction.' The word is derived from the Greek *hairesis* with the primary meaning of 'choice'; cf Ep 1126:374–89.

250 By 'faction' Erasmus evidently refers primarily to the monastic orders. Cf the letter from Thomas More (1516), who spoke of Henry Standish, the 'prince among the Franciscan divines' who 'entered into a conspiracy with certain choice spirits of the same order,' Ep 481:44–6. Edward Lee was also a Franciscan. Cf Ep 1126:251–2: '… the whole order is up in arms if one criticizes a Carmelite or a Preacher.' Nicolaas Baechem, from an early point, and Vincentius Theoderici from 1520 were prominent critics of Erasmus in, respectively, the Carmelite and Dominican orders. In 1517 the prior of the Carmelites in Antwerp publicly attacked Erasmus' New Testament, an incident recorded in a *1519* addition to the annotation on 1 Pet 4:7–8 (*et vigilate*) (cf paragraph 81 n211), described in a 1519 letter and recalled in a letter of 1528; cf Epp 948:114–40 and 2045:46–59.

251 with greater impunity] First in *1535*; previously, 'with impunity'

252 They … hearts.] These two sentences were added in *1527*.

253 I say … monk.] Added in *1535*

254 Cf *Apologia* n22.

Christ to shreds with the most outrageous insults. When Augustine disputed with Pascentius, he always called him a most illustrious man, even though he held the Arian dogma that the Son was not consubstantial with the Father. He argued with Pollentius about divorce with no mention whatever of heresy. He replied respectfully to the idolaters of Madaura, calling them most dear[255] brothers and praiseworthy lords; and he did not begrudge them help in the cause they had commended to him.[256]

**[96]** The business of inquisitors is to disclose, not to judge; to teach, not to accuse falsely; to admonish, not to bring false charges;[257] to guard the faith, not to aim at tyranny under the pretext of guarding the faith.

**[97]** There is no heresy where there is no ambition, where there is no malice, where there is no obstinacy (the companion of arrogance). And heresy does not consist in just any error but only in those that pertain directly to the Catholic faith and[258] expressly oppose the canonical books.

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255 most dear] First in *1535;* previously, 'most beloved.' The change is not based on Augustine's words. In his biblical translation Erasmus generally preferred *dilectus* 'beloved' to VG *carus* 'dear' for the Greek *agapetos*; cf eg the annotations on Rom 11:28 ('but according to the election most dear') and 12:19 ('most dear').

256 Celsus, 'not merely a heretic,' was a pagan and a Middle Platonist, 'author of the most comprehensive polemic against Christianity extant from the second century' (Ferguson *Early Christianity* I 229) but known to us exclusively from Origen's *Contra Celsum*. For the exchange of letters between Augustine and Pascentius see Augustine Epp 238–41, though here Erasmus seems to have in mind Pseudo-Augustine *Collatio beati Augustini cum Pascentio Arriano* PL 33 1156–62, where Pascentius is addressed as *vir spectabilis* 'noble sir.' Here in paragraph 95, Erasmus refers also to Augustine *Ad Pollentium de adulterinis coniugiis libri duo*. Compare the comments with those made in *1519* in the earlier part of the long annotation on 1 Cor 7:39 (*liberata est a lege, cui autem vult, nubat*): 'A certain Pollentius had the same notion, a man, as it seems, serious and learned, against whom Augustine debated in two books, though he treats him in debate not as a leading heretic but as an opponent; accordingly, he refutes his opinion without bringing against him the charge of heresy' ASD VI-8 152:889–92. For Augustine's response to the idolaters of Madaura see Augustine Ep 232. Augustine had been educated in grammar and rhetoric in Madaura and undoubtedly felt a special relationship to its citizens, who, though appropriating Christian language to address the bishop, remained pagans. The letter gives no indication of the nature of the difficulty to which Augustine brought aid; cf Ep 232.7.

257 The tone of the *Contra morosos* becomes more insistently rhetorical as Erasmus approaches the end; cf the string of resonant nouns translated here as verb phrases: *indices non iudices*, *doctores non sycophantae*, *monitores non calumniatores* 'informants not judges, teachers not prosecutors, advisers not slanderers.'

258 and … books.] Added in *1535*

**[98]** How unfair it is to make such a serious charge; and even when[259] the person charged wins out, no reward or retaliation is open to him except his apparent escape. Those[260] who make a false charge of heresy come away with the praise of being zealous; those who have cleared themselves of the false charge come away thoroughly tarred and feathered.[261]

**[99]** Christ does not snuff out the smoking wick; he does not shatter the broken staff.[262] And we treat lofty, gifted, and talented persons as enemies because of some human error, or rather because of our own arrogance!

**[100]** Was it not utterly disgraceful that the *Conclusions* of Pico della Mirandola were once condemned in Italy[263] by great theologians as impious and heretical, whereas now they are read by everyone as Christian and pious, not without the approbation of the theologians?[264]

**[101]** I see that there are some who seek fame by carping at the works of others – a ready and easy way indeed, but most wicked. Once upon a time that fluteplayer showed a better way of gaining fame quickly by recommending himself to the learned and to those celebrated among the masses because if he got their votes, he would be also approved by all the people. But what evil genius showed this way?[265] They attack someone's work from

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259 even when … open to him] First in *1535*. In *1519*, 'even when the person wins out, there is no reward or retaliation'; in *1527*, 'even when the person wins out, no reward or retaliation is open to him.'

260 Those … feathered.] Added in *1535*

261 Cf *Adagia* III v 74.

262 Cf Isa 42:3; Matt 12:20.

263 in Italy] Added in *1527*

264 Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–94), famous humanist and philosopher, was the maternal uncle of Alberto Pio with whom Erasmus in his later career came into conflict. In 1486 Pico offered to debate publicly nine hundred theses he had compiled and published as *Conclusiones sive theses* DCCCC. A papal commission examined them, found six dubious, and condemned seven; but in 1487 Pope Innocent VIII condemned them all. In 1492, however, Pope Alexander VII absolved Pico; cf CEBR III 81–4 and CWE 84 xvii–xviii.

265 It became an almost common refrain of Erasmus that his critics were goaded by fame. He repeatedy accused Edward Lee of attempting to find a 'short cut' to fame: in the *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* he expressed his belief that Lee 'wished to take credit for [Erasmus'] second edition for himself' CWE 72 4; in *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 3* (Note 25) CWE 72 419 he said, 'Nor could [Lee] find a more suitable subject from which to gain his first fame and glory than defaming a brother and friend, and one who deserves well of him'; in Ep 1053:212–459 (13 December 1519) he made the same accusation in writing to his friend Thomas Lupset, referring there also to the flute player. The charge

ambush, they pluck out one or two passages; and immediately in a single day they equal the fame someone has gained by years of sleepless labours. They not only equal it; they surpass it because someone who blames and criticizes is thought to be more learned.

**[102]** What kind of ingratitude is it to claim for oneself the praise due to a whole work simply by correcting one or two places and to pretend at the same time that you got no help from so many other places? Just as if someone were given six hundred gold coins and should cry out that one or two of them were spurious because adulterated,[266] or as if[267] one should condemn the whole spread laid out at a banquet because some sauce was served that was too salty?

**[103]** If it is a token of detestable ingratitude to deny that someone has done a good deed for you, what shall we make of repaying with scorn a duty freely performed? If it is discourteous to look a gift horse in the mouth,[268]

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appears more generalized in *Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii* CWE 84 125: '… envy and a thirst for fame goad many, and they see a wonderful short cut to celebrity in attacking those who are already famous for their writings.' The passage continues with the story of the flute player who 'told his student that, if he wished to obtain renown quickly in Greece, he should go to the most famous artists and win their regard.' Erasmus adds, 'But now an even shorter cut has been discovered: we attack a single famous person' CWE 84 125. For the allusion to the flute player see Lucian *Harmonides* 2. For the accusation as directed against López Zúñiga cf *Apologia adversus Stunicae Blasphemiae* ASD IX-8 124:122–4: 'He makes it perfectly clear that he could not from day to day endure to ackowledge that Erasmus' name was regarded by all book printers, whereas López Zúñiga's name was nowhere. And he saw no better short cut to make a name, than to speak ill of Lefèvre d'Etaples and me.'

266 'Spurious because adulterated': *ὑπόχαλκον καὶ κίβδηλον*. The expression used here is probably based on Plutarch *De liberis educandis* 1.2: *τὰ φρονήματα τῶν ὑπόχαλκον καὶ κίβδηλον ἐχόντων τὸ γένος* 'in the nature of things the spirits of those whose blood is counterfeit or base'; *Plutarch's Moralia* trans Frank Cole Babbitt, Loeb Classical Library 197 (Cambridge MA 1960) 1 5. Cf *Adagia* IV iii 50 'There's copper beneath the gold' and *Adagia* III iv 5 'Adulterated,' where these Greek words are illustrated in proverbial use.

267 or as if … salty?] Added in *1527*

268 Cf Adagia IV v 24 'Looking a gift horse in the mouth.' Erasmus' discussion of this adage offers a close parallel to the comments here on the ingratitude of people who do not appreciate his work. For similar comments on ingratitude see *Apologia* 457 with n10 and the reference there to Seneca. Cf also the prologue to Jerome's *Commentarius in epistolam ad Ephesios*, where Jerome refers to this 'common proverb' in remarking that those who do not like his work, which he offers as a free gift, should not criticize.

what should we think of someone who looks for nothing in a necessary piece of work except something he can snipe at?

**[104]** If someone who is completely illiterate and uneducated assembles or repairs codices without any reward and out of a certain pious pleasure he takes in doing so, would it not come to pass that everyone would find his piety quite admirable? Would they not memorialize him by listing such a person among their notables? And yet in this enterprise some are so ungrateful for this service, which is a great deal more useful and worth a good deal more!

**[105]** If someone gives such persons a new cloak or invites them to a lavish banquet or bestows[269] some money on them, they all but worship him; they talk up his piety everywhere; they share with him their own deserts, which are (to be sure) not inconsiderable. But they had more need of the good deed I did them; I deserve well of them, and they bark at me.

**[106]** And when I occasionally propounded something that seems to disagree with what is generally accepted in the universities, I did not do so without a good reason, and I did so without rancour. Perhaps it would be well for the Christian commonwealth if more notions were picked apart that are now publicly taught as oracular pronouncements – though they admit in private that they hold a different opinion.

**[107]** One person tries to make the whole world Thomistic, another to make it Scotistic or[270] Ockhamistic or Realist or Nominalist.[271] Why rather do we not all try to make it Christian?

**[108]** I hear that some bruit it about that I pass over many places that I ought to have annotated. First of all, I want the reader to be advised that I did not seek out every place in the New Testament that seems to call for annotation but only those places where a true reading was at stake; and of those also I had the good sense to omit many, so as not to overburden the reader. If someone adds to what I have done, I will actually applaud his contribution to the public good. Indeed, if someone disagrees with me on some point, I will

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269 bestows … on] First in *1535*; previously, 'gives some money to'

270 or … Nominalist.] Added in *1527*

271 In the annotation on 1 Cor 1:10 (*ut idipiscum dicatis*) Erasmus in *1519* criticizes in a similar way those who hold on tooth and nail to their parties: Scotist, Thomistic, Ockhamistic, Albertistic; to these he adds in *1527* the Nominalists and Realists, canon lawyers and theologians. For a similar list see *Lingua* (1525) CWE 29 407 with n29, where these factions and their founders are identified; for the expression of a similar sentiment see *Paraclesis* 418–19 with n83.

not be offended in the least,[272] as long as he does so with arguments and not with insults (as any learned person ought to do). Arguments can be honestly refuted with counterarguments, but to counter insults with insults is disgraceful, however hard it may sometimes be at the same time to put up with them. Whoever gives reasons both takes upon himself and provides for his respondent a single task. But whoever is contemptuous in his critique undertakes and pursues a double task;[273] and he drags in a double evil by besmirching the reputation of another and by bringing upon himself a suspicion of malice.

**[109]** To do some good is very fine but very difficult. To inflict injury is very easy but very disgraceful. Why do so many prefer the latter course? Let those who follow the former path show how great they are by achieving a reputation among their descendants, a reputation worthy of a Christian.

**[The Roll-call of Witnesses, 110–11]**

**[110]** If there were some spell I could use to put this new kind of asp to sleep, I would not hesitate to use it.[274] As it is, since none is at my disposal, I take comfort in the favour of good men as an antidote, as it were, against the poisonous hissing of such persons. They bark, but among the truly[275] learned almost no one does; and if any do, they[276] belong to that class of persons who seem to have given themselves over to the devil so as to be able to completely eradicate cultured writing, that is, anything they have not learned. For I think no attention should be paid to the ignorant, unwashed masses or to superstitious, empty-headed women whom these people have either hired or suborned to make an outcry. Against the malice of such people, I take comfort

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272 not … in the least] First in *1527*; previously, 'not be offended'

273 'A double task,' ie to correct and to smear

274 Compare the allusion to Amphion and Orpheus in *Paraclesis* 405–6 with nn9–11. The asp image appears also in paragraph 27i (a *1535* addition) and in the letter of Erasmus 'To the Reader, 1535' 781 with n1.

275 truly] Added in *1535*. Cf paragraph 110g, a *1527* addition: 'true theologians, true monks, true Christians.' The term is applied abundantly in Erasmus' works; cf eg CWE 50 General Index sv 'Christian'; also CWE 43 429 with n31, CWE 45 22, CWE 27 216, CWE 66 173. The expression is biblical, eg Mark 11:32; 1 Tim 5:5.

276 and if any do, they] First in *1527*; previously, 'several.' Compare Erasmus' evaluation of his position in Louvain in 1518, 'New Testament Scholarship' 98: most (of the theologians) approved; some in the distance and behind his back were barking.

first of all in a clean conscience and in Christ our true master of the games;[277] and also in the judgment of many persons whom either holiness of life or extraordinary learning or very high status or the dignity of an ecclesiastical office or (for some) all of these together place beyond reproach. And their approval ought to count for all the more because I have never earned the support of any of them by my services or curried their favour by entreaties. They thank me daily in letters sent from all over the world because my researches (whatever they may be worth) have inspired them to improve their minds and study Holy Scripture; persons who have never seen Erasmus know and love him from his writings.[278] As I said, I have asked nothing of them, and they have no reason to flatter me. They[279] have nothing to fear from me or to seek from me. I have gained their support because they have found useful what I have done and are grateful for it. Just as I have laboured for everyone in general, so too all who are fair and sound[280] are grateful to me, from whatever country, from whatever class of people. I consider this a greater reward than the dignified status of a bishop.[281]

**[110a]** Italy[282] recognizes my services (since I must boast a bit),[283] especially Rome and Venice.[284] Many cardinals have approved of my efforts,

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277 'Master of the games': *agonotheta*. Erasmus liked the image; cf CWE 44 36–7 with n12, CWE 43 127 and 384 with n41.

278 Cf the motto on Albrecht Dürer's well-known 1526 engraving: *Τὴν κρείττω τὰ συγγράμματα δείξει* 'His writings will show you an even better image' (illustration in CWE 12 263).

279 They … fear from me] Added in *1527*. Previously the contextual clauses were taken together: 'They have no reason to flatter me or to seek anything from me.'

280 who are fair and sound] Added in *1527*

281 the dignified status of a bishop] First in *1527*; previously, 'a bishopric'

282 What follows is a long list of Erasmus' patrons, aimed to show the influential endorsement of his work (in Italy, Spain, Germany, Hungary, Moravia, Poland, Britain, France, and, with some reserve, the Low Countries). Paragraphs 110a–d appeared in *1519* in a much shorter form to which many additions and interesting changes were made in *1527* and *1535*. Paragraphs 110e, f, and g were added in *1527*. Paragraph 111, which concluded the *Contra morosos* in *1519*, remained unchanged in all editions. Erasmus appeals elsewhere as well to the witness of eminent people who attest the value of his work; cf eg Epp 296:101–50 and 456:199–235.

283 since I must boast a bit] Added in*1527*; perhaps an allusion to 2 Cor 11:16–12:13

284 In Venice in 1508 Aldo Manuzio had published Erasmus' *Adagiorum chiliades*, a 'landmark' edition; cf Ep 211 introduction; in Rome Pope Leo had accepted the dedication of Erasmus' *Novum instrumentum* (1516) and had written a letter of approval (Ep 864) for the edition of the *Novum Testamentum* (1519).

especially that master of more serious literature, Dominico Grimani,[285] cardinal with the title of St Mark, and that most thoroughly and diversely gifted cardinal with the title of Four Saints,[286] Matthäus[287] cardinal-bishop of Sion, Lorenzo Cardinal Campeggi, and before them Raffaele cardinal of St George, Francesco cardinal-bishop of Volterra.[288] Indeed Leo X, the very primate of the Christian commonwealth, in a very kind letter encouraged me to undertake the earlier edition[289] and then[290] encouraged me again to

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285 Domenico Grimani had been promoted to the cardinal-bishoprics of Albano (1508), Tusculum (1509), and Porto (1511). In dedicating the *Paraphrase on Romans* to him in 1517, Erasmus had addressed him as 'My Lord Grimani of Venice, Cardinal of St Mark's' (Ep 710), and in 1519 Paolo Bombace referred to him as 'San Marco' (Ep 865:22). From 1505 he lived in the palazzo San Marco in Rome; cf CEBR II 133. For the dedication of the *Paraphrase* see 'New Testament Scholarship' 90 with n369; for Grimani's magnificent library of fifteen thousand volumes and his collection of antiquities see ibidem n370.

286 A reference to Lorenzo Pucci; for the 'title' see Ep 865:24 with 24n. Pucci was cardinal of the Sancti Quattro Coronati in Rome from 1513 to 1524.

287 Matthäus … Volterra.] Added in *1527*.

288 From all the prelates mentioned here Erasmus elsewhere claimed to have received help in his New Testament work. Matthäus Schiner encouraged him to complete the *Paraphrases* on the apostolic Epistles (Ep 1171:48–57; cf CWE 44 132 n1) and to paraphrase the Gospel of Matthew (Epp 1248:16–21, 1255:25–31). Lorenzo Campeggi responded to an initiative by Erasmus (Ep 961) with a most encouraging letter (Ep 995), and for his 'unheard-of generosity' Erasmus dedicated the *Paraphrases* on Ephesians to 2 Thessalonians to him; cf Ep 1062:195–8. Erasmus sought help from Raffaele Riario, as well as from Domenico Grimani, to secure a letter of approval from the pope for the 1519 edition of his New Testament (Ep 864 introduction), but it was evidently Lorenzo Pucci who negotiated the letter; cf Epp 860:26–33, 865:14–29. In 1525 Erasmus claimed (Ep 1581:718–19) that Francesco Soderini, cardinal-bishop of Volterra, had also encouraged him *non semel* 'more than once.' Ep 1581:714–53 includes a long list of 'supporters.' Of the list given here in the *Contra morosos* Erasmus dedicated *Paraphrases* to Grimani (Romans), Schiner (James; 1–3 John), and Campeggi (Ephesians to 2 Thessalonians). See 'New Testament Scholarship' 90 and 165–70.

289 There is no known letter from Leo X to Erasmus in which the pope explicitly encouraged Erasmus to undertake the first edition, but on receiving Erasmus' request (Ep 335:339–62, May 1515) to dedicate the Jerome edition to him, Leo responded that he would be grateful to receive any of the 'fruits of [Erasmus'] labours,' Ep 338:28. Erasmus seems to present this as encouragment for the New Testament, which, indeed, he dedicated to Leo (Ep 384); cf Ep 1007:2–9.

290 and then ... later edition] An addition, first in this form in *1527*; in *1522*, 'and encourages me now to produce this later edition.' For the second edition Erasmus succeeded in securing a letter of approval from Leo, Ep 864 ('Prefaces and

produce the later edition – not to mention at the same time bishops and whole legions of learned men.[291] After Leo,[292] Adrian VI did so, a man of a holy life who possessed unequalled learning and very penetrating judgment.[293] Then again, what favour did Clement VII ever withhold from my pursuits, though I sought and expected none? Indeed, this man, who was destined from his very ancestors to promote the most important areas of learning, lends his support not so much to me in particular as to research and religion in general.[294] And the favour of the persons I have mentioned was not limited to words, letters, or ordinary services; it was displayed in more substantial ways.[295]

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Letters' 772–3). Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 113–14 with n491. The dedicatory letter (Ep 384) appeared in all authorized editions.

291 Erasmus' letters indeed show widespread support and admiration for his New Testament project; cf eg Epp 1581:714–53.

292 After Leo … substantial ways.] Added in *1527*, reading 'After him,' which was changed to 'After Leo' in *1535*

293 Adrian VI (Adriaan Floriszoon), elected pope 9 January 1522, was a former professor of theology at the University of Louvain. He was important to Erasmus in silencing critics of his New Testament; cf Ep 1553:45–7 with n5 and 'New Testament Scholarship' 264 with n1098. For Adrian's encouragement see Ep 1571:50–2.

294 Clement VII (Giulio de' Medici, 1478–1534), elected pope 19 November 1523, attempted to silence Erasmus' critics, López Zúñiga, and Baechem in particular, and rewarded Erasmus with two hundred florins for the dedication of the *Paraphrase on Acts*; cf CEBR I 310, and Epp 1414 introduction and 1443B. Clement, an illegitimate child, was born a month after his father, Giuliano, had been slain in the Pazzi conspiracy; he had consequently grown up in the house of his grandfather Lorenzo, the father of Pope Leo X. Lorenzo had continued the Medici tradition of the patronage of literature and the arts. In dedicating the *Novum instrumentum* to Leo X, Erasmus had, as here, recalled the benefits the 'house of Medici' had bestowed on religion and the humanities (cf Ep 384:86–95), a tradition to which Erasmus had appealed in dedicating his *Paraphrase on Acts* to Clement VII; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 239 with n964.

295 Erasmus may have in mind the benefices, appointments, and even cash rewards that came to him as a result of patronage; cf eg Ep 296:120–40. He may also allude to papal dispensations; cf Ep 517 introduction and 'New Testament Scholarship' 86 with n353.

**[110b]** Spain gave me recognition:[296] Francisco, cardinal and archbishop[297] of Toledo, time after time[298] lured me to come to Spain by means of not inconsiderable inducements. Moreover,[299] how favourably I was sought out by Guillaume de Croy, cardinal and archbishop of Toledo (into whose dignity and support of me Alonso de Fonseca, the light of Spain, has now

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296 gave me recognition] First in *1527*; previously, 'gives me recognition.' The change in tense may reflect the deterioration of Erasmus' relations with Spain. If so, the reference is not to the events immediately preceding the Valladolid conference, since this fourth edition of the New Testament was published in March 1527, and those events did not assume officially formal shape until that March; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 281 with n1193. The change in tense may suggest, rather, a growing opposition in Spain that had become evident as early as 1525, for in 1525, 1526, and the beginning of 1527 Erasmus had already received information on growing opposition to his work in that country; cf eg Epp 1744:136 with n20 and 1786; also Rummel *Catholic Critics* II 81–105.

297 cardinal and archbishop] First in *1535*; in *1519* and *1522*, 'the most reverend archbishop'; in *1527*, 'cardinal'

298 time after time] First in *1527*; previously, 'twice.' Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros was made archbishop of Toledo and primate of Spain in 1495, cardinal and inquisitor-general in 1507; cf CEBR II 236. He founded the University of Alcalá de Henares (*Complutum*) where he undertook the great project that became the Complutensian Polygot Bible, published c 1522 after his death in 1517. Erasmus' correspondence attests Jiménez' invitations to him; cf Epp 582:11, 597:53–4, 628:62–3, and 541:42n. Cf paragraph 41a n124 and *Apologia* n34.

299 Moreover … to mention it.] The final form of the sentence in *1535*; in *1519*, Erasmus wrote modestly, without mentioning the name of de Croy, who was still alive: 'Moreover, how favourably I am sought out by the one [ie de Croy] who succeeded [Jiménez] and who now lives at Louvain, engaged in the most honourable pursuits in order that he might match his high fortune with every kind of virtue, I shall not at present report since I do not wish to seem boastful.' Though de Croy died in a hunting accident in 1521, no change was made in the sentence in *1522*. In *1527* the sentence was changed to its present form without, however, the parenthesis, which was added in *1535*. Guillaume (II) de Croy was born into a distinguished Dutch family in the Netherlands and matriculated at the University of Louvain in 1511 at the age of thirteen. In Louvain he had Juan Luis Vives as his teacher. He was appointed bishop of Cambrai in 1516, cardinal in 1517 with the title of Santa Maria in Aquino, and archbishop of Toledo and primate of Spain also in 1517. In 1519 Jacobus Latomus dedicated to him his treatise *De trium linguarum et studii theologici ratione* 'Dialogue on the Three Languages and the Method of Theological Study,' which was indirectly a critique of Erasmus' *Ratio*; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 154 with n604. De Croy nevertheless assured Erasmus of his continuing support of a humanistic education; cf Ep 945 with its introduction. A brief correspondence between Erasmus and de Croy followed (Epp 957–9). Cf CEBR I 367–8.

succeeded)[300] is so widely known that I need not mention it. All of Germany gives me recognition: in their letters bishops and princes offered me very ample rewards, both[301] commending and inspiring my industry by no mean gifts. Hungary gives me recognition, as does Moravia and Poland:[302] in their letters bishops and princes expressed their gratitude, not[303] without adding extraordinary gifts. Two of them were especially outstanding: Johannes Thurzo, formerly the bishop of Wrocław, and Stanislaus, bishop of Olomouc.[304] In Greater Poland[305] there is Piotr, the bishop of Cracow and chancellor of the realm, together with Andrzej Krzycki, bishop of Płock, and Johannes, bishop of Chełmno, as illustrious for his learning as for his mitre.[306]

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300 Alonso de Fonseca (1475–1534) succeeded his father as archbishop of Santiago in 1508; in 1523 he succeeded de Croy as archbishop of Toledo and primate of Spain. Ep 1431:32–3 indicates that Erasmus was aware of Fonseca's support by early 1524, of which he took advantage when he learned of the rising opposition to him in Spain; cf Ep 1748 and n296 above. In April 1527, after the monks had brought their charges against Erasmus, Fonseca wrote to Erasmus declaring his support in the crisis (Ep 1813). Erasmus does not note here Fonseca's death in 1534.

301 both … gifts.] Added in *1527*. Although Erasmus names no one, we know that Albert of Brandenburg, archbishop of Mainz (1514) and cardinal (1518), sent Erasmus a siver-gilt cup as a thank you for the dedication of the *Ratio*; cf Ep 986:40–3. For Albert's enthusiastic support see the same letter, Ep 986:2–16. Frederick, duke of Saxony, sent Erasmus both a letter of support and a medal; cf Epp 963 with 6n and 872:27n. George, duke of Saxony, corresponded with Erasmus regularly and bestowed on him gifts; cf CEBR III 207.

302 Moravia and Poland] First in *1527*; previously, 'Bohemia.' Cf the letter to John Fisher (30 October 1518), in which Erasmus, speaking of the support his work has received, says that he had received letters 'from Bohemia, from Hungary, from Poland breathing the spirit of Christ,' Ep 889:15–16. A few months earlier he had received a letter from Johannes (II) Thurzo, bishop of Wrocław, Bohemia, expressing enthusiasm for his work and naming other supporters; cf Ep 850 (c 20 June 1518).

303 not … Olomouc.] Added in *1527*

304 Johannes (II) Thurzo (cf n302 just above) had died in 1520. In an effusive letter of late 1519 Johannes had expressed his continuing appreciation of Erasmus, which he demonstrated also by sending gifts; cf Ep 1047:34–49. Stanislaus, Johannes' brother and bishop of Olomouc (d 1540), began a correspondence with Erasmus evidently after Johannes' death and was liberal in sending gifts; cf Epp 1242 with introduction and 1272:36–9, and CEBR III 325.

305 In Greater Poland … mitre.] Added in *1535*

306 Erasmus' correspondence with **Piotr Tomicki**, bishop of Cracow from 1525, vice-chancellor to King Sigismund I of Poland, began in 1527 with a letter of self-introduction by Erasmus to which Tomicki replied with a letter and a gift;

**[110c]** What, then, shall I say about Britain, where I have so many patrons, among whom the first was the illustrious baron William Mountjoy; the next, William, archbishop of Canterbury and primate of all England; the third, Thomas, the cardinal-bishop of York, a man of very penetrating judgment; at the very top, the king himself, most blessed with the gifts not only of the mind but of fortune as well, and each of these two men freely and kindly provides me with leisure and, at their pleasure, makes even more generous offers.[307] In this catalogue,[308] in which approving votes are evaluated, not merely counted up, John Fisher, bishop of Rochester, could by himself count for many. And then there is Cuthbert Tunstall, formerly bishop of London,

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cf Epp 1919 and 1953:12–16. A warm friendship followed until Tomicki's death in 1535. Cf CEBR III 328–9. **Andrzej Krzycki**, a nephew of Tomicki, was a humanist and prolific poet. He became secretary to King Sigismund I in 1515, was appointed bishop of Przemyśl in 1522, of Płock in 1527, and was inaugurated archbishop of Gniezno in April 1526. Erasmus' correspondence with Krzycki began in 1525 with Ep 1629 (cf the introduction), to which Krzycki replied with an invitation to Erasmus to settle in Poland; cf Ep 1652:115–21. The two exchanged publications, and Kryzcki sent Erasmus a ring; cf Ep 2375:18–23. **Johannes Dantiscus**, for many years a diplomat for Sigismund I, was elected bishop of Chełmno in 1530 but occupied his see only in 1533; cf CEBR I 377. Dantiscus sent Erasmus a medallion bearing his own image; in response, Erasmus dedicated to Dantiscus his translation of Basil's *De spiritu sancto*; cf Allen Ep 2643.

307 In paragraph 110c Erasmus cites some of his prominent English supporters. The first four names appeared in *1519*. They refer to William Blount (Mountjoy), William Warham, Thomas Wolsey, and Henry VIII. Mountjoy had given Erasmus his initial invitation to England in 1499. Warham, archbishop of Canterbury from 1503 until his death in 1532, had been a generous benefactor, eulogized at length as a Maecenas (ie patron) in the annotation on 1 Thess 2:7 (*sed facti sumus parvuli*). Wolsey became archbishop of York in 1514, and although he died in 1530 about to face a charge of treason, Erasmus left his name stand here in *1535*. Erasmus came to feel that both Wolsey and Henry VIII were more given to making promises than to fulfilling them. Erasmus courted a somewhat indifferent Wolsey with the dedication of his *Paraphrases* on the Epistles of Peter and Jude; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 165 with n653.

308 In this catalogue … London] Added in *1527*, except that 'Fisher' and 'formerly' were added in *1535* (see next note). Fisher favoured Erasmus' ideal of a humanistic education for clergy and supported his New Testament project, encouraging him to write the *Paraphrase on John* (1523); cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 223–5 with n900, Ep 229 introduction, and the eulogy of Fisher in the dedicatory letter for the *Ecclesiastes*, Allen Ep 3036:63–92 / CWE 67 243–4. In 1525 Erasmus had appealed to Fisher's support in his debate with Béda; cf Ep 1571:15–16 with n8.

now[309] of Durham. The office of William Warham was taken over by Thomas Cranmer, a man who not only is a theologian by profession but who also has the spirit and character of a true theologian; in favouring me, he does not yield at all to his predecessor. Add to the list John Longland, bishop of Lincoln, who is also famous for the books he has published.[310] Among the French, I have often been solicited by no mean promises from that incomparable gentleman Etienne Poncher, bishop of Paris,[311] and by the most Christian king, Francis.[312] Finally, though nowhere on earth do slanderers count for as much as they do in our country, and nowhere is less honour paid to genuine learning, still here,[313] too, some favour anyone working for the common good, among whom the principal patrons are Erard, prince-bishop of Liège, a most judicious and sharp-sighted gentleman who is now a cardinal[314] and

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309 now … published.] Added in *1535*

310 **Cuthbert Tunstall** was bishop of London from 1522 to 1530, when he became bishop of Durham. He had assisted Erasmus in collating texts for the second edition of the New Testament and for years gave him some financial support; cf Epp 597:18–23 (1517) and 1750:1–3 (1526). Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 104, 122 with n531, and 323–4 with nn1614, 1615. **Thomas Cranmer** succeeded Warham as archbishop of Canterbury. As archbishop he expressed admiration for Erasmus and specifically for his *Explanatio symboli* (1533). He also continued to pay the annuity granted by his predecessor to Erasmus; cf CEBR I 357. **John Longland**, consecrated bishop of Lincoln in 1521, 'frequently sent Erasmus gifts of money,' Ep 1535 introduction. For the catalogue of Longland's books see the bibliography in CEBR II 341. Erasmus dedicated two of his Psalm expositions to him; cf CWE 63 174 n1 (Psalm 4) and CWE 64 3 (Psalm 85).

311 On Etienne Poncher see *Ratio* 497 with n43. For Francis' invitation to Erasmus see Ep 522:137–57 (1517) and the introduction, where Poncher's role in extending the invitation may be noted. Francis would continue to extend invitations, which, however, Erasmus refused; cf eg Epp 1375 (1523) and 1400, the letter to Francis dedicatory to the *Paraphrase on Mark*; for the dedication to Francis see 'New Testament Scholarship' 227 with n918.

312 Francis.] Added in *1527*

313 'Here' refers to the Low Countries, which may suggest that Erasmus wrote the *Contra morosos* in Louvain, hence not during the summer months of 1518 when he was working with the press in Basel. Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 387 with n1665, where it is noted that Erasmus in retrospect recalled his desire as a young man to 'overthrow the crass barbarism of the Germany of his youth.' On Erasmus' complicated judgment of his native country cf Ari Wesseling 'Are the Dutch Uncivilized? Erasmus and the Batavians and His National Identity' ERSY 13 (1993) 69–102.

314 who is now a cardinal] Added in *1527*. De la Marck was appointed cardinal in 1521.

the chief councillor at the imperial court,[315] and Philip of Burgundy, the most illustrious prince-bishop of Utrecht,[316] both of whom, of their own accord, offer me a very generous fortune, if I were to ask for such a thing – to say nothing,[317] meanwhile, of the emperor Charles and his brother Ferdinand.[318] Among the greatest I mention only the principal figures, though in fact I am daily overwhelmed by letters extending to me the good wishes and thanks of famous universities, of men outstanding for their learning, and of persons who are worthy of praise for their religious devotion.

**[110d]** I have[319] played the role of the *miles gloriosus* in the comedy;[320] to such lengths I have been driven by the unscrupulous behaviour of some people. Nevertheless, I am so far from lying about any of this that I have deliberately withheld some names, for there are some who would rather favour me in secret, as Nicodemus favoured Jesus.[321] And I have not ambitiously proclaimed their praises of me, as I could most truthfully have done, nor have I placed before your eyes the enormous difference between those who approve, favour, and assist me and those who assail, slander, and condemn me. Both deserved to be portrayed, but it was necessary to keep Christian modesty in mind. And it[322] makes no sense to heap dishonour upon them, since they themselves, by their clamour and their character, have brought such dishonour upon themselves that for a long time now the world is trying

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315 and the chief councillor at the imperial court] Added in *1535*

316 For Erard de la Marck and Philip (I) of Burgundy, to each of whom Erasmus dedicated paraphrases, see 'New Testament Scholarship' 159–60 with n638. From mid-1519 certain incidents caused Erasmus to become less confident of de la Marck's support; cf CEBR II 384–5. For the 'offers' of Erard and Philip see eg Ep 794:75–7 (March 1518).

317 to say nothing … Ferdinand.] Added in *1527*

318 Erasmus received protection and support from both Charles V and Ferdinand I, and both responded with enthusiastic support for Erasmus' New Testament project when he dedicated to them a Gospel *Paraphrase*, Matthew to Charles, John to Ferdinand, with dedicatory Epistles, respectively Epp 1270 (April 1522) and 1343 (February 1523); cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 222–6.

319 I have … modesty in mind.] Added in *1527*

320 Ie 'have been a boaster.' Cf paragraph 110a with n283, where a possible allusion to Scripture is suggested. Here the allusion is to a specific classical play, Plautus' *Miles gloriosus* (*The Braggart Soldier*).

321 Cf John 3:1, 7:50–2, 19:39.

322 And it … rid of them.] Added in *1535*. It may therefore be an oblique reference to the fate of Noël Béda, who was exiled in 1533, recalled for investigation, and imprisoned in 1534. In January 1535 Béda suffered a public degradation and subsequent exile, but as the printing of the New Testament of 1535 had

to get rid of them. Relying,[323] therefore, on the appreciation and approval of so many prestigious men, I bear with more equanimity the grunts of ungrateful slanderers. To please everyone is, without doubt,[324] the most fortunate thing of all. But since that has never happened to anyone, the next best thing is to please the best.

**[*Peroratio*, 110e–111]**

**[110e]** And so,[325] to put the case in a nutshell, in opposition to those who condemn the whole enterprise, I have shown that it is and always will be a work of piety to clear away errors from manuscripts of Sacred Scripture or to illuminate them in some way, and that whatever anyone contributes to this in his own measure is pleasing to the Holy Spirit. If anyone slanderously misrepresents my intention, there is nothing I can do but call Christ to witness that I aimed at nothing except the glory of Christ and the benefit of the Christian people. If someone argues that the authority of Scripture is endangered, I have demonstrated that this effort does not destroy it but rather preserves it. If someone imagines that novelty will raise up a storm, I do not apply private authority to change what is read in public; indeed, I very often urge that it not be changed. If there has been a storm of some sort, it was stirred up not by novelty but by the inopportune outcries of some people preaching to the unlearned multitude. If these outcries arose from the unwashed masses, the case could have been made that I had rashly given the ignorant an occasion[326] for such an upheaval; as it is, since the outcries came from pillars of wisdom, I should not be blamed for not suspecting that such men would cause such a thing.

**[110f]** Against those who demand public authorization, I showed that none is needed for a work designed for private reading. It is sufficient if what I propose is submitted to the judgment of the church.[327] If someone requires

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been begun in the summer of 1534 and was completed in early 1535, it is unlikely that these later events are in mind; cf CEBR I 117–18. On Béda as critic of Erasmus cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 266–72.

323 Relying … men] First in *1527*; previously, 'Relying on the appreciation of these'

324 without doubt] Added in *1527*

325 And so … some time now.] Paragraphs 110e, f, and g were added in *1527*. Functioning as the *peroratio*, they provide the opportunity to repeat important points in striking rhetorical fashion.

326 Literally, 'I had given this handle to the ignorant'; cf *Adagia* I iv 4.

327 Cf paragraph 1.

appropriate learning in me, I think I have surpassed what anyone has done in this area up till now.[328] If someone demands care, then where something was amiss, I have corrected it the second time round, as the saying goes.[329] If someone should blame me even for this, I will say I am only human, and I follow the example of the most approved writers. If someone says I am not a theologian, then I played the part of a grammarian.[330] If they scorn a grammarian, the emperor does not scorn the services of his barber or the slave who prompts him with names.[331] If they cry out that no one but a theologian can perform this task, then as the lowliest theologian I have taken the lowliest branch of theology upon myself. If someone is not a theologian unless he knows more than anyone else, the world will have only one theologian. But everyone has his own gifts. If no one provides anything better, it is clear on the face of it that my labour is not entirely lost. If someone does so, I deserve thanks for two reasons: first, I inspired by my example, and second, I helped by preparing the way. If someone cries out that such matters are so trivial that it is not worthwhile for a theologian to give them even a glance, they are refuted by the remarkable lapses of theologians who were in other ways quite outstanding. If some people are ashamed not to know such things, let them learn them, and they will no longer be ashamed. If they are ashamed to learn or find it repellent, we will excuse their shame or even their laziness, but not their envy if they clamour against young people who want to learn them. If anyone is displeased because I handled some theologians somewhat freely, it seemed to me that the cases required me to do so, though such strictures also I softened in later editions.

**[110g]** I never assail any class of persons; I never drew my pen unless provoked by most outrageous attacks; even so, I was more courteous than my challenger – though in fact no theologian or monk ever raged against me, only some rabbinical and many comic types.[332] But for Christ's sake, I beg

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328 Cf *Apologia* 477 with n107, and the reference there to Erasmus' correspondence with Maarten van Dorp in 1514 and 1515, where Erasmus attempts to show that his work adds significantly to what Valla and Lefèvre had done.

329 Cf *Adagia* I iii 38.

330 Erasmus reiterates the points made in paragraphs 80–4.

331 Cf the imagery used to make the same point in the 1515 letter prefatory to the *Annotations*, Ep 373:156–9, cited paragraph 21 n62.

332 'Rabbinical' is Erasmus' ironical way of referring to the Sorbonne theologians. Applied to the theologians, the term recalls the very negative image of the rabbis portrayed in Matt 23:1–8. For 'comic types,' literally, 'dressed in a Greek pallium,' see Plautus *Curculio* 2.3. Cf also *Adagia* IV viii 9.

you, if we go on snapping at each other in this way, what will the final result be except to bite ourselves to pieces? How much more reasonable would it be for anyone who finds something lacking in my work to point it out to me privately, so that I can remedy it myself, or else to refute it in public, but with arguments, not with scurrilous insults. In that way, the reader would not be infected with the bitterest poison, and I would be not a little grateful. Older scholars should promote the progress of younger ones; and, on the other hand, young scholars should not lord it over older ones.[333] In that way, the candour and fairness of older scholars and the restraint and modesty of younger ones will promote concord, do away with storms, reduce bad feelings, maintain the authority of professors, safeguard the dignity of the profession, and increase its usefulness. Come, let all of us who want to be true theologians, true monks, true Christians accept this rule, and they will not regret obeying it. What outcome can be expected from this rabid strife except the uproar of which we already have seen the beginning for some time now.

**[111]** What I have said will abundantly satisfy anyone who will allow himself to be satisfied to any degree at all. But for those who hold their ears so as not to know or close their eyes so as not to see, no one can perform enough. Accordingly, let the attention I have given this business up to this point be sufficient.

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333 The respect due to the elderly by the younger is a topos that Erasmus uses elsewhere as well; it permeates his dealing with Frans Titelmans, evident indeed in the title of his *Responsio ad Collationes cuiusdam iuvenis gerontodidascali* (*Response to the Discussions of a Certain Youth, Teacher of an Old Man*). On Titelmans see 'New Testament Scholarship' 265–6, 333–5. Cf also *Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei* CWE 72 3–4. With Erasmus' recommendation here for conciliation, compare his plea in the dedicatory letter to Campeggi (both 1520 and 1521 versions) for the *Paraphrases* on Ephesians to 2 Thessalonians, CWE 43 284–97 (Ep 1062).

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# ERRORS IN THE VULGATE

introduced, translated, and annotated by
ALEXANDER DALZELL

The *Solecisms* and the six pieces that follow constitute a series of critical lists of grammatical errors and false readings in the Vulgate. All are highly selective: as Erasmus notes in the title to *Solecisms*, he has chosen only 'a few examples from a great many.' The lists are organized into categories: solecisms, obscurities, textual corruptions, and so on, but the different categories are not strictly or systematically maintained. Some items would be more appropriate to another list than that to which they have been assigned. In a few cases, a verse turns up in more than one category. Nor does it appear that great care was taken to select the best examples of each of the problems discussed: serious errors stand side by side with trivial slips. In the strict sense of the term, these lists cannot properly be called indexes, though 'index' is one of the words that Erasmus uses to refer to them; for example, the list of 'Interpolations' is identified as an *Index eorum quae sint addita*. But he speaks of them also as an *elenchus*, for example, in the 'Letter to the Reader, 1535' printed above. By 'index' Erasmus means simply a 'list' without any suggestion that they are complete. Despite their obvious shortcomings, however, Erasmus thought them worth including in three editions of his New Testament, those of 1519, 1522, and 1527. Their interest for us lies partly in the reaction they produced and more particularly in the light they throw on Erasmus' aims and methods.

In a letter to Maarten Lips Erasmus defines his aim in revising the New Testament as 'to emend anything corrupt, to explain ambiguities, elucidate obscurities, and change anything that is notably barbarous in expression.'[1] The categories of errors mentioned in the letter explain the classification established for the indexes. The *Solecisms* deals principally with examples of bad or barbarous Latin. This is followed by a list of 'obscure passages,' which in turn is followed by examples of textual corruption. The two following sections provide further examples of corruption, those that arise from omissions or additions to the text. The final two pieces are brief and deal with mistranslation. The emphasis throughout is essentially philological. In listing the deficiencies of the Vulgate, Erasmus sometimes adds to these grammatical weaknesses a lack of stylistic elegance, and this issue too is illustrated in these indexes. But elegance always takes second place to accuracy and clarity: '... my object was to make the language more correct and lucid, not to

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1 Ep 843:32–4; errors in translation are mentioned later in this letter; cf Ep 843: 262–6, 332–9. See Rummel *Erasmus' Annotations* 89–121 for a comprehensive discussion of Erasmus' aims.

polish it.'[2] Only if the translation is clear and correct can the full message of Scripture be revealed.

Another notable characteristic of these indexes is their polemical tone. This is apparent even in the phrasing of the titles: 'Palpable and Unpardonable Solecisms ...,' 'To Pacify Those Who Say That the Explanations We Thought Necessary in our Annotations Were Superfluous,' 'Faults ... Too Obvious to Be Denied,' 'Where the Translator Presumed ...' Even before the publication of the first edition, Erasmus was aware of the controversial nature of his work,[3] and by 1519 when these lists first appeared, he had already been informed of the criticisms of Edward Lee. But Lee was only one of his critics. For the rest of his life Erasmus felt compelled to devote a great deal of time to defending his New Testament. Gradually criticism began to focus more and more on theological issues, but in 1519 Erasmus still thinks of his work as essentially philological; hence the need for a defence on philological grounds.

There are few changes in the text of the three editions of these lists. The texts of *1519* and *1522* are generally identical. A few corrections and additions were made in *1527*, but the essential character of the commentary remains. All of these seven lists disappear in the final edition of 1535, and they were not included in the *Opera omnia* of 1540. Erasmus draws attention to their absence from the final edition in a brief 'Letter to the Reader,'[4] printed at the end of the annotations and just before the *Index rerum ac vocabulorum*. His explanation sounds somewhat tongue-in-cheek. He writes, first, that 'that awful snake' has now fallen silent, or at least has moderated his attack, and second, that some people have been offended by the uncivilized tone of his attack on the Translator of the Vulgate. So, as a pacific gesture, he has decided to remove these 'uncivilized lists.' The irony is patent. Erasmus may have grown tired of the controversy, but he had not changed his mind.

Who is the 'awful snake'? The most learned and dangerous of the critics of Erasmus was the Spanish scholar Diego López Zúñiga, but by 1535 he was already dead. The most likely candidate for Erasmus' ire is Edward Lee. In late 1531 Lee became archbishop of York and was now less active in pursuing Erasmus. But he had been among the first to attack Erasmus' revision of the Vulgate, and although Lee did not publish until 1520, his opposition was known to Erasmus by 1518. The hostility that Erasmus felt towards Lee, who was still a relatively young and inexperienced man, often perplexed

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2 Ep 373:203–4 ('Prefaces and Letters' 790)
3 Cf letter of Maarten van Dorp (September 1514), Ep 304:95–163.
4 For the translation of the letter see 'Prefaces and Letters' 781.

Erasmus' friends. If Lee is the 'snake' intended here, then these lists, which first appeared in 1519, may in the first instance have been aimed primarily at him. Lee was not, of course, the only critic of Erasmus' work: Dorp, Latomus, and later López Zúñiga questioned Erasmus' aims. But Lee seems to have got under Erasmus' skin. It is interesting that the first example listed under the heading of 'Obscure Passages' is the use of the verb *traducere* at Matt 1:19, one of the interpretations attacked most vigorously by Lee.[5]

The text used for the translation of these seven pieces is that of *1522*, and divergent readings in the other two editions are indicated in the notes. The 1522 edition has been chosen because it was this version of the *Solecisms* that López Zúñiga criticized in his *Assertio ecclesiasticae translationis Novi Testamenti a soloecismis quos illi Erasmus Roterodamus impegerat* (Rome 1524), to which Erasmus responded in a letter to Hubertus Barlandus.[6]

Since Erasmus' principal concern in compiling these lists is in problems of usage, I have kept the Latin and Greek lemmata and added my own translations. Many of these translations will strike the reader as strange. They were designed not to convey the intended meaning of the Vulgate but to show the sense that, according to Erasmus, these texts would bear if construed strictly in accordance with the principles of classical grammar.

In translating the biblical lemmata, I have identified passages by book, chapter, and verse. In his text Erasmus cites book, chapter, and page number, not of the translation but of the *Annotations* in which the particular reading is discussed.[7] These page numbers would be of no use to any reader of this volume who was not provided with the three relevant editions of Erasmus' New Testament. So for the sake of convenience, I have followed the Leiden edition in giving (anachronistically) chapter and verse. Further, we have numbered

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5 Edward Lee (c 1482–1544) began his attack on Erasmus soon after the publication of the *Novum instrumentum*. His criticism of Erasmus' interpretation of the passage in Matthew was included in some notes that he had written and that were transmitted to Erasmus by his friend Maarten Lips; see Epp 750 and 765. Cf also 'New Testament Scholarship' 151–3 and 192–3. Erasmus' contemptuous disdain for Lee in 1519 is evident in two passages in Dirk Martens' 1519 edition of the *Colloquia*, both later omitted but reported by Lee; cf Ep 1061:374–430 with nn38, 42, 45; and Rummel *Erasmus' Annotations* 127–9.

6 The text of the opening and closing paragraphs is printed in CWE as Ep 2172; cf the introduction to this letter. A translation of the full text will be published in CWE 74; the text presented here is coordinate with the text there, based on the *1522* version.

7 But for the problem facing the reader of the indexes of *1522* see 'New Testament Scholarship' 200; for the indexes in *1519* see ibidem 119 with n516.

the entries to facilitate reference; new entries made in *1527* are inserted into the text of *1522* and designated by number and letter.

In *1519* and *1522* these lists followed directly on the *Contra morosos*, each with its own title but without a general title for the seven 'Indexes.' For convenience we have designated them as a group by the title given above, 'Errors in the Vulgate.'

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# PALPABLE AND UNPARDONABLE SOLECISMS PERPETRATED BY THE TRANSLATOR, A FEW EXAMPLES OUT OF A GREAT MANY

*Soloecismi per interpretem admissi*
*manifestarii et inexcusabiles*
*e plurimis pauci decerpti*

One of Erasmus' aims in making a revised translation of the New Testament was to rid the traditional text of faulty and barbarous language. He argued that the uncouth language of the Vulgate was a serious stumbling block for sophisticated readers. But that was not all: linguistic problems could also lead to misunderstandings, and in fact some of the great interpreters of the past were misled by the inadequacies of the text.[1] So Erasmus placed the *Solecisms* at the head of his lists of philological problems. They constitute the most detailed, and certainly the most controversial, in the series.

Classical rhetoric distinguished between barbarisms and solecisms. Barbarisms are errors located in a single word, while solecisms are errors in syntax.[2] This distinction is not maintained in Erasmus. While most of his examples are of syntactical blunders, he also includes errors in word use (*tanta* for *tot*, *quasi* for *tamquam*), problems with accidence (*odientes*), and careless imitation in Latin of Greek genders and declensions. Two points emerge from this selective catalogue of solecisms: first, that the Translator's difficulties arose principally from the slavish manner in which he adhered to the idiom of the Greek and Hebrew originals, often to the detriment of both grammar and sense; and second, that the New Testament Greek text itself was not free from 'solecisms.' In forty-five brief paragraphs, with few exceptions each little more than an item entry in which a single passage from the Vulgate is cited, Erasmus points to the inadequacies of the church's Bible. In one paragraph (the second last), Erasmus adds a verse from the Greek original that, according to his standards, contains a number of glaring solecisms.

This attack on the barbarity of the language of a sacred text inspired a fierce reaction. Corruptions in the text could more easily be shrugged off, for they did not impugn the wisdom of the inspired authors; such errors arose from the all too fallible practice of the copyist. But to attack the sacred originals or the translation that had been approved by the church for centuries was a different matter. The public offensive was opened by Eck and Lee shortly after the first edition of Erasmus' New Testament came off the press.[3]

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1 For barbarous language see the *1519* addition to the prefatory letter to the *Annotations*, Ep373:66–8 ('Prefaces and Letters' 784 n10) and Ep 844:63–90; for inaccurate language leading to misunderstanding see the prefatory letter to the *Annotations*, Ep 373:84–105 ('Prefaces and Letters' 785–6 with n16) and Erasmus' comment below on Heb 3:3 ('Solecisms' #41).

2 See eg Quintilian *Institutio oratoria* 1.5.6 and 34; and *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.17.

3 For the opposition of Johann Maier of Eck see Ep 769 (February 1518); for the angry and protracted controversy with Edward Lee, which was underway at least by 1518, see CEBR II 311–14. For Lee see also Introductory Note to 'Errors in the Vulgate' n5; and for Eck, 'New Testament Scholarship' 120 with n518.

The heaviest guns, however, were manned by Diego López Zúñiga, who published his *Assertio ecclesiasticae translationis Novi Testamenti a soloecismis quos illi Erasmus Roterodamus impegerat* at Rome in 1524. Erasmus responded in a 'Letter to Barlandus' in 1529, which was published the same year in the *Opus epistolarum*.[4] It was reprinted in the *Opera omnia*, where it was given the title *Epistola apologetica adversus Stunicam*. A translation and commentary will appear in CWE 74.

López Zúñiga's opposition rested on four main arguments. First, the Translator should not be blamed for reproducing in Latin the peculiar idioms of the Greek;[5] after all, many of these were literal translations from the Hebrew, a language, says López Zúñiga, of which Erasmus himself confessed his ignorance.[6] Second, it was possible to find parallels in ancient writers for most of the disputed phrases in the Vulgate, provided the net was cast widely enough to cover the whole of Latin from Plautus to Apuleius and the Fathers. Third, many of the passages that Erasmus condemned were not mistakes of the Translator but evidence of a defective text. We should remember that at this time there was no standard text of the Vulgate. Erasmus and López Zúñiga were reading from different Latin texts, and at least in certain instances López Zúñiga may have had a better text than Erasmus.[7] Finally, if all else failed, López Zúñiga was prepared to argue that whatever interpretation might be placed on a given verse if construed according to the rules of classical grammar, Christian people down the ages had always understood it as it was intended to be understood.

This debate about the Latinity of the Vulgate raises important questions about the nature of translation and about the correct style for Latin prose. López Zúñiga could see no objection to a literal translation that kept faithfully to the idiom of the original; even a version that defied grammatical analysis could be defended as contributing to a sense of sacred mystery. Erasmus, on the other hand, wanted a translation that was, above all, accurate and clear and did not offend one's sense of literary decorum. As

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4 For the context see 'New Testament Scholarship' 331 with n1420 and the 'Introduction: Background and Aim of the *Contra morosos*' in *Contra morosos* 799–800 with n8.

5 Compare the case made for the Translator by Frans Titelmans: the reproduction of a Greek idiom in Latin when found in Scripture was not a solecism, however incorrect; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 333–4 with n1435.

6 On Erasmus' ignorance of Hebrew see López Zúñiga *Assertio* B 4v (Rome 1524); and Erasmus Epp 181:41–5, 334:129–37, 396:292–301.

7 See *Epistola apologetica* 18 on Luke 23:29 with n85 CWE 74 (forthcoming).

for the correct style for Latin prose, the ideal for him was expressed in the catchphrase *loqui Latine*, which he employs frequently; this means not just 'to speak Latin' but 'to speak good Latin,' 'to speak in a correct and elegant manner.' The expression was borrowed from Quintilian, who distinguished between *loqui grammatice* 'to speak grammatically' and *loqui Latine* 'to speak elegantly.' This distinction was taken over by Valla, who attempted to define the concept of 'elegance' and to establish a canon of 'acceptable authors,' the *probati autores*.[8] Erasmus himself never clearly defined his own canon, although he was fond of recommending to his young friends a list of authors he considered most worthy of study and imitation.[9] Such lists are generally catholic in scope, encompassing poets and dramatists, as well as writers of prose. But in his criticisms of the Latinity of the Vulgate, the canon is severely limited. Only prose writers of the Late Republic and the Silver Age were acceptable models, and these only in their characteristic usages and structures, not in passages that aimed at a special effect. Even the biographer Suetonius was suspect: people with strict standards of linguistic purity, says Erasmus, regarded him as an unreliable guide.

Although the linguistic standard that Erasmus sets in his exchange with López Zúñiga is very high, most of the examples that he chooses to criticize are fairly flagrant cases of grammatical error, always provided that his criteria for what constitutes good Latin are accepted. López Zúñiga has a stronger case when he argues that some of Erasmus' 'solecisms' are in fact textual corruptions. But to admit to corruptions in the text of whatever kind is to go most of the way towards making the case for a new translation.

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8 On Valla's position see M. Tavoni *Latino, grammatica volgare: Storia di una questione umanistica* (Padua 1984) 117–69; and T.O. Tunberg 'The Latinity of Valla's *Gesta*,' *Humanistica Lovaniensia* 37 (1988) 31–78.

9 The various lists differ considerably one from the other. In Ep 20, Cicero, Quintilian, Sallust, and Terence are recommended as models for prose. Ep 63 recommends for study Virgil, Lucan, Cicero, Livy, Sallust, Lactantius, and Jerome. See also *De ratione studii* CWE 24 669, 673. On this subject see Erika Rummel '*Probati autores* as Models of the Biblical Translator' in *Acta Conventus Neo-Latini Torontonensis* ed. A. Dalzell, C. Fantazzi, R.J. Schoeck (Binghamton 1991) 121–7.

# PALPABLE AND UNPARDONABLE SOLECISMS PERPETRATED BY THE TRANSLATOR, A FEW EXAMPLES OUT OF A GREAT MANY

**[1]** Matthew, chapter 5:41. *quicunque te angariaverit mille passus, vade cum illo et alia duo* ['Whoever shall compel you to go a thousand paces, go with him two other'] instead of the correct *miliarium unum* ['a mile'] and *alia duo* ['two other'].[1]

**[2]** Chapter 6:26. *magis pluris estis vos* ['Are you of more greater account']. But Roman usage does not admit such doubling of the comparatives. Augustine in his *De locutionibus veteris testamenti* points out that this idiom is taken over from the Hebrew.[2]

**[3]** Chapter 7:5. *videbis eiicere* ['You will see a casting out'] for *dispicies ut eiicias* ['You will see clearly to cast out']. The Translator has allowed the Greek idiom to stand, for in Latin *videt eiicere* implies that 'one sees [someone] casting out.'

**[4]** Chapter 8:29. *quid nobis et tibi* ['What to us and to you'] for *quid tibi nobiscum*? ['What have you to do with us?']. Again he has kept the Greek idiom; for we do not say *quid mihi et longis tibiis*, but *quid mihi cum longis tibiis*? *τί μοι καὶ μακροῖς αὐλοῖς* ['What have I to do with long flutes?'].[3]

**[5]** Chapter 11:1. Following the Greek, the Translator wrote *cum consummasset praecipiens* ['when he had finished while instructing'] for *finem fecisset praecipiendi* ['He had made an end of instructing'].

**[6]** Same chapter, verse 5. He wrote, rendering the Greek literally, *pauperes evangelizantur*. *pauperes evangelizantur* ['The poor are being preached good

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1 'Mile' is translated into Latin by *mille passus*, literally 'a thousand paces.' In this usage *mille* is an adjective. The English plural 'miles' is translated by the noun *milia* 'thousands (of paces).' The Vulgate mixes the two constructions.

2 The reference seems to be to Augustine's *In Heptateuchum locutiones*, but I cannot find any discussion of double comparatives in that work.

3 An adage about fruitless effort; cf *Adagia* I v 97. Erasmus gives his version of the adage first in Latin, then in Greek; for the Greek text see Suetonius *Otho* 7.2.

news'] is no less a solecism than *pauperes annuntiantur* ['The poor are being announced'] when something is announced[4] to them.

**[7]** Chapter 15:1. *tunc accesserunt ad eum ab Hierosolymis scribae* ['Then there came to him from Jerusalem scribes'] for *scribae Hierosolymitani* ['scribes of Jerusalem'], since the Greek is *οἱ ἀπὸ Ἱεροσολύμων γραμματεῖς*.[5]

**[8]** Chapter 20:25. *principes gentium dominantur eorum* ['The rulers of the gentiles lord it of them']. First, he used *eorum* for *earum*, keeping the gender of the Greek. Then he wrote *dominantur eorum* ['lord it of them'] for *dominantur eis* ['lord it over them'], carelessly keeping the Greek case.

**[9]** The same, verse 28. *filius hominis non venit ministrari* ['The Son of Man came not to be ministered']. This follows the Greek but produces poor Latin; the translation ought to be *non venit ut sibi ministraretur* ['came not to be ministered unto']. Nor, for that matter, is *venit ministrare* acceptable Latin for *ad ministrandum*.[6]

**[10]** Chapter 22:10. *impletae sunt nuptiae discumbentium* ['The wedding was filled of guests']. Here the Translator has been half asleep; he has kept the Greek genitive instead of writing *impletae sunt discumbentibus* [ablative, 'with guests'].

**[11]** The same, verse 30. *neque nubent, neque nubentur* ['Neither will they marry nor be given in marriage']. Has anyone ever heard the word *nubentur*?[7]

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4 is announced] *nuntiatur 1522*; *nuntiantur* 1527, obviously a printer's error

5 There are two problems here: the first of clarity and the second grammatical. It is not clear from the Latin whether the meaning is that scribes arrived from Jerusalem or that the scribes were those belonging to Jerusalem; the Greek text makes it clear that the second is the intended meaning. Grammatically, it is not good Latin to attach an adverbial phrase (from Jerusalem) to a noun (scribes), though this is found sometimes in classical authors.

6 The Vulgate has *filius hominis non venit ministrari, sed ministrare*. Erasmus objects first to the use of *ministrari* in the sense 'to be ministered unto'; in classical Latin the passive of this verb is used of things supplied, not of persons served. Second, he objects to the use of the infinitive *ministrare* to express purpose instead of the classical Latin gerund.

7 *Nubo* in classical Latin is an intransitive verb and therefore should not be used personally in the passive in the sense, 'They are given in marriage.' Cf 'Passages Manifestly Corrupt' #5.

**[12]** Chapter 24:6. He wrote *opiniones bellorum* ['opinions of war'] for *rumores bellorum* ['rumours of war'].

**[13]** Furthermore, the conjunction *quia*, whether used for *quod* or added in conformity with Greek usage, is superfluous in Latin.[8] For example, John 1:20 *confessus est quia non sum ego Christus* ['He confessed that I am not the Christ']. Even if we admit that *quia* has the same force as *quod*, the effect is to make the Baptist say that the Evangelist was not the Christ. Again, in the same author, chapter 4:17 *recte dixisti quia virum non habeo* ['You have rightly said that I have no husband']. What else does this mean except that, according to the Samaritan woman, Christ did not have a husband? Likewise, *quia* is clearly redundant in Mark 12:6[9] *dicentes quia ego sum* ['saying that I am'] and again in Luke 1:61 *quia nemo est in cognatione tua, etc*. ['that there is none of your kindred, etc'].

**[13a]** Mark 2:16.[10] *videntes quia manducaret* ['seeing that he was eating'] instead of the correct *quum vidissent eum edentem* ['when they saw him eating'].[11]

**[13b]** Mark 13:6. *dicentes quia ego sum* ['saying that I am']. This expression conforms neither to Greek nor Latin usage.

**[13c]** Acts 15:23. *Antiochae et Syriae et Ciliciae* ['at Antioch and Syria and Cilicia']. This neither translates the Greek nor respects Latin idiom.[12]

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8 There are two grammatical issues here. First, Erasmus objects to the use of *quia* instead of *quod* to introduce indirect speech, eg 'He said *that* (*quod*).' Second, the Vulgate uses both *quia* and *quod* to introduce direct speech. This, Erasmus argues, is an unacceptable construction and would be misunderstood, because the reader would interpret the conjunctions as introducing indirect speech. So, eg he would understand John 1:20 to mean, 'He [ie John the Baptist] confessed that [*quia*] I [the writer of the Gospel] am not the Christ.'

9 The reference should be Mark 13:6.

10 At this point in *1527* Erasmus added four new entries, the second of which merely expands the reference (in #13 above) to Mark 13:6, cited as Mark 12:6.

11 For Erasmus' intent to represent accurately in Latin the Greek tenses see 'New Testament Scholarship' 47 (on Matt 3:7).

12 Erasmus is criticizing the use of the locative case here; in classical Latin the locative is used to signify place only when referring to cities, towns, and small islands.

**[13d]** Acts 20:35. *beatius est dare magis quam accipere* ['It is more blessed to give more than to receive']. The Greek text does not have the double comparative, and Latin usage does not permit it.[13]

**[14]** Luke, chapter 1:72. He wrote *memorare* ['to remind'] for *meminisse* ['to remember'].

**[15]** Chapter 4:23. His translation has *quanta audivimus* ['what great things we have heard'] for *quae* or *quaecunque audivimus* ['what' or 'whatsoever we have heard']. Similarly, in John 12:37 he wrote *tanta signa* ['such great signs'] for *tot* or *tam multa* ['so many'].

**[16]** Luke 19:23. After using the word *pecunia* ['money'; feminine noun], he continued with *exegissem illud* ['I might have required it'; *illud* neuter pronoun] under the impression that he was speaking Greek, for *ἀργύριον*, the word here translated by *pecunia*, is neuter in Greek.

**[17]** Also in chapter 23:29. *et ventres quae non genuerunt* ['and the wombs that did not bear'], he used *quae* [feminine] for *qui* [masculine], thinking he was speaking Greek, since *κοιλίαι* ['wombs'] is feminine.

**[18]** John, chapter 1:14. *gloriam quasi unigeniti a patre* ['the glory as if of the only begotten of the Father']. The use of *quasi* ['as if'] for *tamquam* ['as'] is a dangerous solecism. For *quasi* implies pretence, not truth. But Christ was in truth the only begotten of the Father.

**[19]** Chapter 4:9. *non coutuntur Iudaei Samaritanis* ['The Jews do not codeal with the Samaritans']. Let us suppose it is correct to say *utuntur Samaritanis*, meaning 'They have dealings with the Samaritans'; but has anyone ever used *couti* in the sense 'to have mutual dealings one with another'?

**[20]** Chapter 6:21. *fuit ad terram* ['was at the land'] for *appulit ad terram* ['put in to land']

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13 *beatius magis* would be a double comparative and therefore, in Erasmus' view, ungrammatical. The Greek text means, 'It is blessed to give rather than to receive.'

**[21]** Chapter 7:14. He said *festo mediante* ['the feast being in the middle'] in imitation of the Greek, a bold but hardly felicitous translation; one could have used the paraphrase *cum dimidium festi peractum esset* ['when the feast was half over'].

**[22]** Chapter[14] 14:12. He said *et maiora horum faciet* ['and he will do greater works *of* these'; genitive] for *maiora his* ['greater works *than* these'; ablative], forgetting he was speaking Latin.

[23] Chapter 15:2. *ut fructum plus adferat* ['that it may bring forth fruit the more'] for *plus fructus adferat* ['bring forth more fruit'] or *fructum uberiorem adferat* ['bring forth more luxuriant fruit']. For in Greek it is *πλείονα καρπόν* ['more fruit'].

**[24]** The same, verse 6. After the preceding *palmites* ['branches'; a masculine plural], he continued with *et colligent ea* ['And they will gather those things'; neuter], keeping the Greek gender, *κλῆμα* ['branch'] being a neuter word. The change of number is acceptable in Greek, since what precedes is a collective, *omnem palmitem* ['every branch']. I pass over the fact that, shortly before [15:2], he twice added *eum* ['it'] under the influence of the Hebrew idiom: *omnem palmitem non ferentem fructum, tollet eum et omnem qui fert fructum, purgabit eum* ['Every branch that bears not fruit, he will take *it* away, and every branch that bears fruit, he will purge *it*']. The same linguistic error, however, is in the Greek.

**[25]** Acts 2:12. *ad invicem dicentes* for *inter se dicentes* ['saying one to another']. What Latin speaker ever said *ad invicem*? Surely it is no more acceptable than *ad mutuo* ['to mutually'] would be? Yet the expression is very common in the Translator.

**[26]** Chapter 3:19. He translated *μετανοήσατε* by the previously unexampled *paenitemini igitur* ['Repent ye therefore']; he could have used the good Latin verb *resipiscite.*

**[27]** Chapter 5:4. Having earlier used the word *agrum* ['land'; masculine], he forgot he was speaking Latin and continued his translation with *venundatum* ['It was sold'] because *κτῆμα* and *χωρίον* are neuter in Greek.

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14 Chapter … Latin.] This entry was omitted in *1527*.

**[28]** Chapter 7.[15] *multi eorum qui habebant spiritus immundos, clamantes voce magna, exibant* ['Many of those who had unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out']. Could anything be more absurd than this? The sense is 'The spirits came out with a loud cry from those that were possessed by them.'[16]

**[29]** Chapter 10:16. He said *per ter* ['during thrice'] for *ter* ['thrice'] or *tribus vicibus* ['three times']. Someone[17] defends the grammar of this passage on the grounds that the Translator has reproduced the Greek construction. But it is precisely in this way that solecisms arise. In any case, the Translator has not reproduced the Greek construction, which would require *ad ter*. In Latin *ad Calendas Ianuar*. means 'about the first of January.'

**[30]** Chapter 16:13. *foras portam* ['to outside the gate'] for *e porta* ['from the gate']

**[31]** Chapter 17:15. He used *quam celeriter* ['how quickly'] for *quam celerrime* ['as quickly as possible'], although the Greek has [the superlative] *ὡς τάχιστα*.

**[32]** Chapter 20:32.[18] Although the preceding word is *verbum* ['word'], he follows with *qui potens* ['who is able'] rather than *quod potens* ['which is able'], because *λόγος* is masculine in Greek.

**[33]** Chapter 20:24. *nec facio animam meam preciosiorem quam me* ['neither count I my life dearer than myself']. Here the Translator has rendered neither the wording nor the sense of the Greek, for in Greek it is *οὐδε ἔχω τῆν ψυχήν μου τιμίαν ἐμαυτῷ* ['Neither count I my life dear unto myself'].

**[34]** Chapter 21:14. He said *et cum suadere ei non possemus* ['and when we could not advise him'], although earlier [in 21:12] he had shown that they

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15 Chapter 7] Corrected in *1527* to 'Acts 8:7'

16 A marginal note placed beside the annotation on the verse (cue phrase as cited here) calls the Translator's version 'silly,' and in the annotation Erasmus compares this passage to the liturgical hymn to the *theotokos* in which the Latin makes the Lord pregnant with the world's Redeemer! Cf ASD VI-6 234:336–7: 'The Lord, having regard for her humiltity, after the angel's announcement conceived the Redeemer of the world.'

17 Someone … January.'] Added in *1527*. The 'someone' referred to here is López Zúñiga; cf *Assertio* D 1r (Rome 1524).

18 This and the following item are placed in their proper order in *1527*.

had in fact advised him. This is a misuse of *suadere* ['to advise'] for *persuadere* ['to persuade']; the two words differ very greatly.

**[35]** Chapter 26:2, 3. *de omnibus, quibus accusor a Iudaeis, rex Agrippa, aestimo me beatum apud te, cum sim defensurus me hodie, maxime te sciente omnia, quae apud Iudaeos sunt consuetudines et quaestiones* ['Concerning all the counts which I am arraigned by the Jews, King Agrippa, I esteem myself fortunate before you, since I am going to make my defence today, because you are especially familiar with all the customs and controversies of the Jews']. First, I pass over the fact that *quibus accusor* ['which I am arraigned'] is used for *de quibus accusor* ['on which I am arraigned'], *aestimo* ['esteem'] for *existimo* ['reckon'], and *beatum apud te* ['fortunate before you'] for *qui defensurus me sim apud te* ['(fortunate) since I am going to make my defence before you']. But what a gross error it is to follow a preceding *omnia* [neuter] with *consuetudines et quaestiones* [feminine nouns]! The Translator has failed to notice that the Greek gender, which he kept in *omnia*, needed to be changed; for who ever heard of *omnia consuetudines*? Let us argue now, if we can, that the Translator never nodded.

**[36]** The Epistle of Paul to the Romans, chapter 2:15. *testimonium illis reddente conscientia ipsorum, et inter se invicem cogitationum accusantium aut defendentium* ['their conscience also bearing witness, and *of* their thoughts accusing or excusing one another']. What a fatuous error it was, after translating the Greek genitive absolute by an ablative, *reddente conscientia* ['conscience bearing witness'], to allow the second genitive ['of their thoughts …'] to stand, to the annoyance of grammarians everywhere!

**[37]** Chapter 10:16. *quis credidit auditui nostro*? ['Who has believed our hearing?'] What speaker of Latin ever said *auditus* ['hearing'] for the report of a speaker?

**[38]** Chapter 12:9. *odientes malum* ['abhorring evil'] for *odio habentes* ['have an aversion to'][19]

**[39]** The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 8:15. He said *non minoravit* ['He did not lessen'] for *non minus habuit* ['He did not have less'].

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19 Here there is no problem with the syntax, but the form *odientes* is obsolete.

**[40]** The Epistle to the Philippians, chapter 4:10. *refloruistis pro me sentire* ['You have flourished again to feel on my behalf'] for *reviguit vester in me affectus* ['Your love for me has grown strong again'].

**[41]** The Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 3:3. *quanto ampliorem habet honorem domus, qui fabricavit eam* ['inasmuch as he who built the house has more honour *of* the house'], when the sense is *quanto maiorem honorem habet qui condidit domum, quam ipsa domus* ['inasmuch as he who built the house has more honour than the house itself']. And we persist in saying that it does not matter how we speak, although this solecism led Thomas[20] and his more recent followers to fall into the most frightful error!

**[42]** Chapter 6:16. He used *per maiorem sui* ['by that which is greater *of* themselves'] for *maiorem se* ['by that which is greater than themselves'], not realizing that he was speaking Latin, not Greek.[21]

**[43]** The Epistle of James, chapter 1:15. When he says *Deus intentator est malorum* ['God is a provoker of evil'], is this not blasphemy against God? For *intentator* is said of someone who provokes evil. The meaning is that God neither tempts anyone with evil nor is tempted.

**[44]** Revelation, chapter 1:4. There is a quite extraordinary solecism in the Greek text *ἀπὸ τοῦ ὁ ὤν, καὶ ὁ ἦν, καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος* ['from him who is, and was, and is to come']. For how can *ὁ ὤν* be construed with the preceding *ἀπό*? Second, what possible meaning has *ὁ ἦν*? Then, how does *ὁ ἐρχόμενος* square with *ἀπο τοῦ*? Let those who think the Apocalypse was written by John deny, if they

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20 Thomas Aquinas seems to have construed *domus* with *honorem* ('the honour of the house'); cf *Lectura super epistulam ad Hebraeos* cap 3, lect 1 (on Heb 3:3). For the difficulties in this passage see Erasmus' annotation on 3:3 (*habet domus*). For the frightful errors of the great theologians see the prefatory letter to the *Annotations*, Ep 373:97–100 ('Prefaces and Letters' 785–6 with n16) and *Apologia* n91. This passage (Heb 3:3) appears again in 'Obscure Passages' #47.

21 Ie the Translator adopted the Greek construction, which expresses comparison by a genitive rather than the proper Latin construction (ablative of comparsion), thus inviting the reading 'greater of themselves' rather than 'greater than themselves.' Cf 'Solecisms' #22 for the same type of 'solecism.'

will, that the apostles ever spoke bad Greek! For this is the view of certain people, the defenders of the apostles.[22]

**[45]** Luke 21:38. *et omnis populus manicabat ad eum* ['And all the people morninged to him']. He coined this Latin word for the Greek *ὤρθριζε*, a deplorable effort; for who could accept *manicare* for *mane venire* ['to come in the morning']?

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22 Erasmus held that the apostles learned their Greek from contemporary speech, a form of the language corrupted by popular and vernacular influences. The contrary view, that the apostles were inspired by the Holy Spirit and therefore could not write bad Greek, was expressed, for example, by Eck (Ep 769:69–92), claiming to speak for the majority opinion; cf Translator's Note to 'Solecisms' n3. For the controversy see Ep 844:63–108, and the annotations on Matt 2:6 (*et tu Bethlehem*) and on Acts 10:38 (*quomodo unxit eum*); also López Zúñiga *Assertio* E 3V–F 1R (Rome 1524).

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# OBSCURE PASSAGES WHERE TRANSLATORS OF GREAT RENOWN HAVE GONE ASTRAY: A FEW EXAMPLES SELECTED FROM A COUNTLESS NUMBER AS A HANDY WEAPON AGAINST THOSE WHO SAY THAT THE EXPLANATIONS WE THOUGHT NECESSARY IN OUR ANNOTATIONS WERE SUPERFLUOUS

*Loca obscura et in quibus lapsi sint magni interpretes, ex innumeris pauca decerpta ut sit ad manum quod obiciatur eis, qui dicunt superfuisse, quod nostris annotationibus foret explicandum*

This list differs from the other six in that, while they deal with grammatical errors, corruptions, and mistranslations in the text of the Vulgate, this text is concerned with matters of interpretation and therefore points more specifically to the *Annotations*. Controversy over the interpretation of Scripture is as old as Christianity itself, but in the sixteenth century the humanist emphasis on the word gave a new importance to questions of exegesis. In *Hyperaspistes* 1 CWE 76 214–35, Erasmus launched a lively attack on Luther's claim that all Scripture is clear to those who possess the Spirit. When pressed, Luther had to concede that in addition to possessing the Spirit, a knowledge of grammar was essential, but for Erasmus even this could not guarantee certainty: what, he asked, would Demosthenes have made of a simple sentence like 'The word was made flesh'; for even when we have a reliable and uncorrupted text, certain difficulties and obscurities remain that cannot be definitively resolved. To these difficulties, however, the Vulgate added further obscurities by mistranslation, textual corruption, and imprecise language. Hence the necessity for discussion and annotation.

To acknowledge the existence of theological ambiguities in Scripture suggests the need for a full commentary, but as Erasmus made clear in his preface to the *Annotations*, this was not his intention. Nevertheless, in this list of 'Obscure Passages' he does include some examples where the difficulties are theological and exegetical, for example, Matthew 11:12, 1 Corinthians 3:12, Galatians 1:16, and Hebrews 2:7. But in the majority of cases the problems are essentially philological. The selection is further limited to places where the ambiguity of the text can be shown to have led previous commentators astray. The list covers many different kinds of obscurity: obscurities arising from textual corruption, for example, Hebrews 5:11, 13:2, and Acts 24:14; those caused by bad translations leading to confusion and misunderstanding, for example, Luke 1:1, John 12:35, and Colossians 3:15; obscurities arising from a poor choice of words where the clear meaning of the Greek is translated by a polysemous Latin term, for example, Matthew 1:19 and Luke 1:51; obscurities caused by a slavish adherence to the grammatical structure of the Greek leading to confusion in the Latin, for example, Romans 3:2; and obscurity introduced by faulty punctuation, for example, Luke 19:12, Romans 2:7, and 2 Corinthians 5:17. Particularly interesting are passages like Romans 14:5, where Erasmus says in his annotation that it is impossible to make the meaning clear without departing from a 'pedantic literalness.' Again, at Luke 22:36, where Jesus seems to be counselling his disciples to buy a sword, one may translate the Greek literally, but to interpret it literally would produce a reading that is 'completely alien to the mind of Christ.'

In the *Apology*[1] Erasmus states that one of his primary aims in producing a new translation of the New Testament is to make the language 'more transparent' (*dilucidius*). He does this not by a wholesale rewriting of the text but by removing difficulties caused by textual corruption and inaccurate and ambiguous translation; and where the problems are essentially interpretative, by offering whatever help philology can provide to narrow the range of exegetical possibilities.

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1 Cf 465–6: 'I have altered some passages not so much to improve the style as to make the text clearer and more accurate.'

# OBSCURE PASSAGES WHERE TRANSLATORS OF GREAT RENOWN HAVE GONE ASTRAY: A FEW EXAMPLES SELECTED FROM A COUNTLESS NUMBER AS A HANDY WEAPON AGAINST THOSE WHO SAY THAT THE EXPLANATIONS WE THOUGHT NECESSARY IN OUR ANNOTATIONS WERE SUPERFLUOUS

**[1]** Matthew, chapter 1:19. *traducere* ['to make an example of'] is misunderstood by the Master of the Sentences.[1]

**[2]** Chapter 11:12. *regnum caelorum vim patitur* ['The kingdom of heaven suffers a violent onslaught']. Most commentators interpret this as applying to the forcible control of the emotions; but Christ means that gentiles and sinners push their way forcefully into the faith, while the Jews, although invited, refused to enter.

**[3]** Luke, chapter 1:1. *rerum quae in nobis completae sunt* ['of the things that were completed in us']. Would anyone have understood the Latin without reference to the Greek? The evangelist means that the events he is about to narrate are certain and well established. The Translator recognized no difference between *πεπληρωμένων* ['completed'] and *πεπληροφορημένων* ['assured'].

**[4]** The same, verse 51. *dispersit superbos mente cordis sui* ['He scattered the proud in the understanding of their/his heart'].[2] The general run of commen-

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1 The verb *traducere* has several meanings and is therefore open to various interpretations (cf #39 below). According to Erasmus in his annotation on the passage, Peter Lombard, 'the Master of the Sentences,' understood the verb here to imply a sexual relationship (*Sententiae* 4.27.6). Cf the annotation on Matt 1:19 (*nollet traducere*), an annotation that received significant additions subsequent to *1516*; on its formal clarity in *1516* see 'New Testament Scholarship' 58. For Erasmus' response in *1519* to Edward Lee's criticism see Introductory Note to 'Errors in the Vulgate' 868 with n5. Cf also Rummel *Erasmus' Annotations* 129–31.

2 *Sui* could mean in ecclesiastical Latin either 'in his heart' or 'in their heart'; the Greek original does not have the same ambiguity.

tators imagines that this means: God scattered the proud by the cogitation of his heart; but the sense is that the proud were shattered by God in their counsels and thoughts. There is no ambiguity here in the Greek since the text reads 'their heart.'

**[5]** The same, verse 73. *iusiurandum, quod iuravit ad Abraham pa. no. daturum se nobis* ['the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant to us']. The usual way of pointing these lines when they are sung by the choir in church (presumably, because of the exceptional length of the sentence) has led many to miss the true meaning, as I have indicated there.[3] Later [verse 77], *in remissionem* ['for the remission'], when it should be *in remissione* in the sense of *per remissionem* ['by the remission']. And shortly afterwards [verse 78], o*riens* ['the East'] is a noun, although it is commonly taken as a participle ['rising']. There are other difficulties in this canticle, which is sung every day in church and understood by few.

**[6]** Chapter 2:35. *tuam ipsius animam pertransibit gladius* ['Then a sword shall pierce your own soul']. Hugh of St Cher[4] and Lyra[5] went astray with *tuam ipsius*. Augustine[6] stumbled over *pertransibit* ['go through'], believing it the equivalent, as is sometimes the case, of *praeterire* ['pass by']. But the Greek is διελεύσεται, meaning 'will go through the middle of' or 'pierce.'

**[7]** Chapter 19:42. *si cognovisses et tu* ['if you too had known']. An obscure phrase and up to now understood by few

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3 'There': *illic* seems to refer to the annotation on Luke 1:71; Erasmus' efforts to clarify the sequence of thought in Luke 1:70–3 are described in 'New Testament Scholarship' 125 with n536.

4 Cf Hugo Cardinalis *Opera omnia in universum Vetus et Novum Testamentum* 8 vols (Venice 1732) VI 146r.

5 In the annotation on Luke 2:35 (*et tuam ipsius animam)* Erasmus speaks disdainfully of the interpretations of Hugh and Lyra, and in a *1527* addition explains that these exegetes found a reference here to the 'soul of Mary's son, the soul Mary loved as her own soul.' For the comments of Hugh of St Cher and Nicholas of Lyra see ASD VI-5 484:71nn.

6 In the annotation on Luke 2:35 (*et tuam ipsius animam*) Erasmus refers to Pseudo-Augustine *Quaestiones veteris et novi testamenti* 73, ASD VI-5 486:81–97 (cf 81–97n).

**[8]** Chapter 22:36. *de emendo gladio* ['about the purchase of a sword']. The interpretation of Lyra and the moderns[7] is rejected as completely alien to the mind of Christ.

**[9]** John, chapter 12:35. *adhuc modicum lumen in vobis* ['Yet a moderate light is among you']. This is generally understood as 'a little light is among the apostles,' but the meaning is that Christ, as the light, will dwell among you a little while.

**[10]** Acts, chapter 20:24. *nec facio animam meam preciosiorem quam me* ['neither count I my life more precious than myself']. Who could grasp the meaning of this, seeing that the Translator has rendered it so badly? But I have discussed this in 'Solecisms.'[8]

**[11]** Epistle to the Romans, chapter 2:7. *quaerentibus vitam etc* ['to those who seek life etc']. The Translator has produced such a poor version that no sense can be made of it.[9]

**[12]** Chapter 3:2. *credita sunt illis eloquia* ['The utterances were entrusted to them']. Lyra interpreted this to mean that the Jews believed in the utterances, when the meaning is that the utterances of God were committed or entrusted to them.[10]

**[13]** Chapter 5:16. *nam iudicium quidem ex uno* ['for the judgment indeed from one']. Commonly understood to mean 'from one man, Adam,' when the sense is 'from one sin.'

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7 In his long annotation on Luke 22:36 (*sed nunc qui habet sacculum*) Erasmus reports that Lyra and Hugh understood Jesus' words to 'sell the cloak and buy a sword' as an injunction to 'fortify themselves against persecution.' But interpretations varied; cf *Methodus* 446 with n103. For the 'moderns' as distinguished from the 'ancients' cf *Methodus* n29.

8 Cf 'Solecisms' #33.

9 Erasmus works through the syntactical difficulties of the passage in the annotation on the verse ('to those seeking life').

10 Cf the annotation on Rom 3:2 ('to them, the utteraces'), where Lyra's view was cited in *1519* and *1522*, but the citation was omitted in *1527* and *1535*; cf CWE 56 90–1 with n6.

**[14]** Chapter 11:11. *ut illos aemulentur* ['that they may emulate them']. Thomas imposed a fourfold interpretation on this without, however, reaching the truth, for the meaning is 'so that God might provoke them to emulation.'[11]

**[15]** Chapter 12:1. *rationale obsequium* ['reasonable service']. Commonly taken to refer to a moderate maceration of the flesh, when the sense is that God requires the sacrifice not of a brute beast but of one who partakes of reason, that is, man himself.

**[16]** Chapter 14:5. *alius iudicat diem ad diem, alius iudicat omnem diem* ['One judges the day in accordance with the day, another judges every day']. Augustine's interpretation seems very far removed from Paul's meaning, although there is some distortion also in Ambrose's treatment of the passage.[12] For Paul is discussing the superstitious observance of certain days after the manner of the Jews, while at that time every day was equally sacred for Christians.

**[17]** The same, verse 2. *qui infirmus est, olus manducet* [Let the man who is weak eat vegetables']. This is generally interpreted as a command that the superstitious should eat vegetables. Paul, however, would prefer that no one be superstitious. He is pointing out what the strong man does who relies on his faith, and what the weak man does who is a prey to his superstition.[13]

**[18]** The same, verse 5. *in suo sensu abundet* ['Let him abound in his understanding']. To abound in one's understanding is the mark of the obstinate man. Paul means that in things that can be done or left undone without committing a sin, each man should satisfy himself in his own mind.

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11 Cf the annotation on Rom 11:11 ('that they may emulate them') CWE 56 301–2 with n2, where Thomas is cited and his four interpretations are listed.

12 For Augustine see the annotation on Rom 14:5 ('for one judges'), where Augustine is cited, CWE 56 371–2 with nn3, 5, and 6. For Ambrose see Ambrosiaster *Commentarius in epistolam ad Romanos* (on 14:5).

13 Erasmus translated with the present indicative ('The man who is weak eats vegetables'), as opposed to the Translator's present subjunctive.

**[18a]** Chapter[14] 15:18. *eorum quae per me non effecit* ['of those thing which (Christ) did not effect through me']. This is explained in various ways.

**[19]** The First Epistle to the Corinthians 2:13.[15] *spiritualibus spiritualia comparantes* ['comparing spiritual things with spiritual'].[16] The majority interpret this to mean that holy actions befit holy men, but Paul means that we should adopt a manner of speaking that is fitting for spiritual things.

**[20]** Chapter 3:12. *lignum, foenum, stipulam* ['wood, hay, stubble']. This is taken to refer to sinful actions and to degrees of sin, but Paul is thinking of the corrupt teaching of some apostles, which would be repudiated if judged by a true standard, and both learners and teachers would be wasting their efforts on things that had to be unlearned.[17]

**[21]** Chapter 10:22. *an aemulamur dominum* ['Do we emulate the Lord?'] instead of 'Do we provoke to anger?'

**[22]** The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 1:11. *ex multarum personis facierum* ['from persons of many faces']. The phrase is most obscure. I have suggested various explanations.[18]

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14 Chapter … ways.] Added in *1527*. The annotation on which it is based ('of those things which through me [Christ] did not effect') appeared first in *1519*; cf CWE 56 406–7 with n1. In the annotation Erasmus records the explanations of Ambrosiaster, Origen, Chrysostom, and Theophylact.

15 Cited as 1 Cor 2:2 in LB

16 This is the version in DV, only one of many possible versions of the Latin of this ambiguous phrase. Other possibilities are 'preparing spiritual things for spiritual men' and 'matching spiritual things with spiritual [words].' In his annotation on the verse (*spiritalia* [sic in all editions] *comparantes*) Erasmus favours the last-mentioned interpretation.

17 Cf *Ratio* 638 with n776 for a more extended discussion of this passage.

18 Erasmus provides his own clarifying exposition of the passage in his paraphrase on 2 Cor 1:11, CWE 43 208.

**[23]** John, chapter 18:28.[19] *ad Caipham* ['to Caiphas']. Here because of a corrupt text Augustine goes totally astray.[20]

**[24]** [Second Corinthians], chapter 4:7.[21] *ut sublimitas sit virtutis Dei* ['that it may be the excellence of the power of God']. But the sense is that the excellence of power shown by us is of God and not of us.

**[25]** Chapter 5:17. *si qua in Christo nova creatura* ['if any new creature in Christ']. The sense is 'If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature.'

**[26]** Chapter 8:19. *destinatam voluntatem* ['destined will']. Thomas interprets this as meaning 'predestined from eternity,'[22] which is very far from what Paul meant, since the word he used was *προθυμίαν*, that is, 'readiness of mind' or 'inclination.'

**[27]** The same, verse 23. *gloriae Christi* ['the glory of Christ']. The passage is obscure but cannot be dealt with here in a few words.[23]

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19 Not John 18:24, as in LB. This entry reappears (as #29, and in almost the same form) in the following section on 'Passages Manifestly Corrupt' in *1519* and *1522*, but the repetition was removed from *1527*.

20 Cf the annotation on John 18:18 (*adducunt ergo Iesum ad Caiapham in praetorium*), where Erasmus outlines Augustine's alternative solutions to the topographical problem created by a text in which Jesus was 'led to Caiaphas to the praetorium': either Caiaphas had gone to the praetorium or Caiaphas' house was large enough to accommodate the praetorium and his own separate quarters. The problem was textual: the Greek text reads, 'led Jesus *from* Caiaphas' house to the praetorium.' For Augustine's discussion see *Tractatus in Iohannis evangelium* 114.1. (*Caipham* is a Vulgate spelling.)

21 The insertion of a note on John in the middle of a series of notes on Second Corinthians has caused confusion in *1519* and *1522* (followed by LB). Erasmus continues here simply with 'chapter 4,' which in the present sequence ought to refer to John 4; but the reference of course is to 2 Cor 4:7. The confusion is removed in *1527*. The same problem arises with the next four entries.

22 Erasmus reported Thomas' interpretation in the *1516* annotation on the verse (*destinatam voluntatem*). Cf Thomas Aquinas *Lectura super epistulam secundam ad Corinthios* cap 8, lectio 3. Cf ASD VI-8 418:539–40n.

23 In the annotation on the 2 Cor 8:23 (*gloriae Christi*) Erasmus describes a variety of interpretations without adopting any one.

**[28]** Chapter 10:12. *sed ipsi in nobis* ['but ourselves in us']. The passage is obscure and generally not well understood. It too cannot be commented on in a few words.

**[29]** In the Epistle to the Galatians, chapter 1:16. *non acquievi carni et sanguini* ['I did not give in to flesh and blood']. Thomas and many of the moderns interpret this to mean 'I have not given in to the sins of the flesh.'[24] But Paul is denying that he discussed his Gospel with Peter and the other apostles, whom he calls 'flesh and blood.'

**[30]** In the Epistle to the Ephesians, chapter 1:22. The common reading is 'above the whole church,' but the meaning is 'Christ is the supreme head of his church, set over all, for all power was given to him.'

**[31]** The same, chapter 2:2. *potestatis aeris* ['of the power of the air']. A passage thus far understood by few.[25]

**[32]** In the Epistle to the Philippians, chapter 1:18. *dum omni modo* ['while in every way'] or *per occasionem* ['as opportunity arises']. But this cannot be explained in a brief note.

**[33]** Chapter 2:7. *formam servi accipiens* ['taking on the form of a servant']. Explained in a way that is different from the common interpretation.[26]

**[34]** The same, verse 13. *et perficere* ['and to do']. This is taken to mean 'to complete,' although the Greek is *ἐνεργεῖν*, that is, 'to work [in].'

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24 Cf the annotation on Gal 1:16 (*non acquievi*), where Erasmus records this as the view of Thomas and Hugh of St Cher. Cf Thomas Aquinas *Lectura super epistulam ad Galatas* cap 1, lectio 4.

25 The Greek (like the Vulgate) is ambiguous: 'according to the prince of the power of the air the spirit now working in the disobedient' – what is the intended antecedent of 'spirit'? In *1516* Erasmus in his translation attempted to clarify: 'according to the prince who has authority over the air, who [or 'which'] is the spirit now working …' No ambiguity remained in the paraphrase on the verse: 'Satan's spirit itself is also putting forth …' CWE 43 312–13.

26 Cf the annotation on Phil 2:6 (*esse se aequalem Deo*): '… the "form of a servant" here does not refer to the human nature assumed but to the appearance and likeness of sinful man …' Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 72 with n293.

**[35]** The same, verse 17. *supra sacrificium* ['above the sacrifice']. This passage should be interpreted quite differently from the usual interpretation.[27]

**[36]** In the Epistle to the Colossians, chapter 2:2. *divitias plenitudinis* ['the riches of fullness']. Since the Greek is *πληροφορίας*, the meaning can only be that Paul wishes for them an assured faith and acceptance of the mystery.[28]

**[37]** The same, verse 8. *ne quis vos decipiat* ['lest any man deceive you'] instead of *ne praedetur* ['lest any man despoil'], which is certainly a mistake on the part of the Translator.

**[38]** The same, verse 14. *chirographum decreti* ['the handwriting of the decree']. This passage is generally understood by few.[29]

**[39]** The same, verse 15. *traduxit* ['He made a show of']. Augustine's interpretation is examined.[30] In this passage Thomas goes woefully astray.[31]

**[40]** The same, verse 18. *nemo vos seducat* ['Let no man seduce you'] instead of 'Let no man cheat you of the prize.'

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27 Erasmus understands Phil 2:17 to speak of two sacrifices: the Philippians' faith and Paul's own life; cf the annotation on the verse (*supra sacrificium*) and the paraphrase on it, CWE 43 375 with n38.

28 Erasmus repeatedly attempted to establish this meaning for the basic word in its various forms (here a noun); cf especially his translation of Luke 1:1 for the analagous verb and his annotation on the verse (*quae in nobis completae sunt rerum*). He comments on the verb in 'Obscure Passages' #3 above.

29 Erasmus adopted the preferred text, which read 'the handwriting [or 'contract'] through decrees'; he translated, 'the handwriting which through its decrees was disadvantageous to us.' His paraphrase gives a lucid picture of the image he believes is intended; cf CWE 43 414–15.

30 Ie examined in the annotation on the passage (*traduxit*), where Augustine's reading is given as *exemplificavit* 'made an example of,' 'made a show of' – 'an accurate but inelegant reading,' Erasmus adds. Cf 'Obscure Passages' #1 above.

31 In his annotation (cf preceding note) Erasmus reports the two interpretations of Aquinas: 'He translated the saints to heaven' or 'He expelled the demons from the man.' Cf Thomas Aquinas *Lectura super epistulam ad Colossenses* cap 2, lectio 3.

**[41]** The same. *ambulans in his quae non vidit* ['walking in the things that he has not seen']. This passage has been understood by no one; even Augustine seems to have stumbled over it.[32]

**[42]** The same, verse 20. *quid adhuc decernitis* ['Why do you yet decree?']. The Translator has got it wrong, and as a result the passage is commonly misunderstood. Paul means that they no longer need be subject to human ordinances.

**[43]** Chapter 3:15. *exultat* ['exults'] for the original *βραβενέτω* ['Let it rule'].[33] The moderns also, following the Translator, go completely off the track.

**[44]** In the Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 2:7. *minuisti eum paulo minus ab angelis* ['You have made him a little lower than the angels']. This passage is explained in a way that differs from the usual interpretation.[34]

**[45]** The same, verse 10. *decebat enim* ['for it became him']. This is said of the Father, but interpreters commonly refer it to the Son, wrongly reading *consummari* ['to be made perfect'] for *consummare* ['to make perfect'].

**[46]** The same, verse 18. *et tentatus* ['and been tempted']. This passage is explained in a new and correct manner, and the text has been restored.[35]

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32 Augustine Ep 149.23–8 (to Paulinus). Cf ASD VI-9 368:489–91 with 495n and 498n and the annotation on Col 2:18 (*ambulans*), where Erasmus suggests Augustine's view may have been based on a false reading of the Greek.

33 As he indicates in his annotation on 3:15 (*exultet* [*1516–27*], *exultat* [*1535*]), the Greek verb means 'rule,' not (as the 'modern theologians' have understood) 'rejoice.' (*Exultat* [*1535*] is clearly a mistake for VG *exultet* ['Let it exult'].)

34 The 'usual interpretation' is 'a little lower than the angels.' In his annotation Erasmus suggests that the Greek phrase, translated 'a little,' may mean 'for a little time,' ie that Christ was lower than the angels during his brief sojourn on earth. Erasmus' interpretation of this verse is the central issue in his controversy with Lefèvre; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 72 and 99–100 with nn406–10.

35 Erasmus read the passage without 'and' (cf DV 'wherein he has suffered *and* been tempted'), and interpreted 'suffer' in the sense of 'experience': 'Since he experienced temptation, he is able to help those who are tempted.'

**[47]** Chapter 3:3. *ampliorem honorem domus* ['the greater honour of the house']. I have demonstrated that the reading is patently corrupt and that, up to now, the sense of the passage has not been understood.[36]

**[48]** Chapter[37] 5:8. *et quidem cum esset* ['and indeed since he was']. A dreadfully obscure passage, now made clear.

**[49]** The same, verse 11. *interpretabilis ad dicendum* ['that can be interpreted so as to say']. Thomas ties himself in knots over this.[38] The fault is the Translator's, who should have written 'difficult of explanation' [*difficilis enarratu*] or 'difficult to interpret' [*difficilis ad interpretandum*].

**[50]** Chapter 11:34. *castra verterunt* ['The camp turned']. Some interpret this as though it were *castra everterunt* ['They overthrew the camp'], when the meaning is that 'the camp turned to flight.'

**[51]** The same, verse 37. *in melotis* ['in sheepskins']. Here Thomas produced some fantastic nonsense.[39]

**[52]** Chapter 13:2. *placuerunt quidam angelis ho*[*spitio*] *re*[*ceptis*] ['Some have pleased angels whom they have entertained']. As we generally read this in a

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36 Cf 'Solecisms' #41. By adopting the Greek construction for comparison (genitive), the Vulgate read, 'Jesus … has greater honour of the house' (understand eg 'in the house'), whereas the sense is '… greater honour than the house.'

37 Chapter … clear.] This entry was omitted in *1527*. Compare the translations, Vulgate and Erasmus: VG 'Who, offering prayers was heard. And, indeed, though he was the Son of God, he learned obedience through suffering'; ER 'Who, though he had offered prayers and had been heard, nevertheless, even though he was the Son of God, he learned obedience through suffering.'

38 Erasmus' cue phrase for the annotation on 5:11 (*et interpretabilis ad dicendum*) followed the Vulgate of *1527,* though he recognized that the reading was due to a scribal error and that the Translator actually wrote *ininterpretabilis* (the preferred Vulgate reading, Weber 1847). But the word itself opened the way to scribal error: Thomas thought the word could mean either 'impossible to interpret' or 'needing interpretation'; cf Thomas Aquinas *Lectura super epistulam ad Hebraeos* cap 5, lectio 2.

39 For Thomas' 'fantastic nonsense' see the annotation on 11:37 (*in melotis*) ASD VI-10 360:562–8; and Thomas Aquinas *Lectura super epistulam ad Hebraeos* cap 11, lectio 8.

corrupt text, so we understand it wrongly. The meaning is 'Some have entertained angels unawares, believing them to be men.'

**[53]** The First Epistle of Peter, chapter 2:2. *quasi modo geniti infantes rationales, lac* etc ['just as newborn infants, being rational, ... milk'].[40] A corrupt reading gives rise to a mistaken interpretation, for Peter does not say that children are rational, but he calls the milk of the mind rational, not that of the body.

**[54]** Chapter 2:23. *tradebat autem iudicanti se iniuste* ['He delivered ... to him that judged him unjustly']. A corrupt reading gives rise to an erroneous explanation, for Peter means that Christ did not take vengeance for himself but gave it to the Father, who judges justly.

**[55]** Chapter 3:6. *pertimentes ullam perturbationem* ['fearing any disturbance']. But the sense is 'not showing any fear.'

**[56]** The same, verse 7. *honorem impartientes* ['bestowing honour']. Although Peter is speaking about abstaining from intercourse, the moderns explain the passage as dealing with the provision of food and clothing for one's wife in accordance with her rank.[41] Likewise, he[42] interprets the following passage about not impeding prayers to mean that prayers are not heard unless there is peace between the man and the woman.

**[57]** The same, verse 8. We read *in fide* ['in faith'] instead of *in fine* ['in the end'] or *in summa* ['finally']. Hence some remarkable confusion in the commentators.[43]

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40 So reads the *1527* Vulgate; but in the preferred reading of the Greek text, 'rational' modifies 'milk.' To clarify, however, Erasmus translated very freely; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 47.

41 In the annotation on 1 Pet 3:7 (*honorem impartientes*) Erasmus refers to 'Lyra and many interpreters of the sort' whose views he 'is not pleased' (from *1522*; in *1516*, *1519*, 'is ashamed') to report, though he does report their view as that given in his note here.

42 The sudden change to the singular 'he' after the reference to 'the moderns' is strange. Erasmus must have been thinking primarily of one of the moderns, perhaps Lyra, as the entry here virtually reproduces the latter part of the annotation cited in the preceding note. 'The following passage': Ie the final clause in 1 Pet 3:7.

43 Cf the annotation on 1 Pet 3:8 (*in fide autem*): 'What a vast field for disputation on the subject of faith is open here for the moderns … when Peter has neither written nor intends anything of the sort!'

**[58]** The same, verse 18. *mortificatos quidem carne* ['mortified in the flesh']. Because of a corrupt reading, the moderns are a long way from the truth.[44]

**[59]** Chapter 4:7. *estote igitur prudentes* ['Be ye therefore prudent']. But in this passage Peter is commanding [us] not[45] to be temperate.

**[60]** In the Second Epistle of Peter, chapter 1:19. *et habemus firmiorem* ['and we have a surer']. Previously this passage was poorly understood.[46]

**[61]** The same, chapter 2:8. *aspectu enim et auditu* ['for in sight and hearing']. This passage is now explained very differently from the way in which it was previously understood.[47]

**[62]** The same, verse 10. *sectas non metuunt* ['They do not fear the sects']. A fresh interpretation is given.[48]

**[63]** In the First Epistle of John, chapter 5:16. *non pro illo dico ut roget quis* ['I do not say that a man should pray for him / for it']. This is a very difficult passage, now provided with a new interpretation.[49]

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44 Erasmus clarified by translating 'suffered in the flesh.'

45 not] Omitted in *1527* to read correctly 'is commanding [us] to be temperate.' LB prints *non* (ie '*not* to be temperate'), following this entry as it appeared in *1519* and *1522*, where *non* was printed apparently by mistake for *nos* 'us.'

46 In his annotation on the verse (*et habemus firmiorem*) Erasmus notes the difficulties of the 'moderns,' who wondered how Peter could say that the word of the prophets was 'surer' than that of Peter or the Father. He noted first that Greek often uses the comparative for the positive (thus, 'We have a sure prophetic word'), and second, that we should understand this expression to mean that the prophetic witness was made more sure by the witness of the Father at Christ's baptism.

47 Erasmus interprets the expression to mean, 'Since Lot had holy eyes and holy ears, he tortured himself by having to look daily upon their unrighteous deeds'; cf the annotation on 2 Pet 2:8 (*aspectu enim et auditu*); but cf also RSV.

48 In his annotation on the 2 Pet 2:10 (*sectas non metuunt*) Erasmus recognizes that the Greek word translated by *sectas* can mean 'opinion' but suggests another interpretation: the same word can also refer to 'recognized glory,' ie 'distinction,' and here means, 'They do not fear those of superior authority, like rulers and bishops.'

49 The Vulgate permitted the reading: 'Do not pray for the man.' Erasmus noted the Greek, which clearly refers to the sin: 'Do not pray for the sin.' DV, AV, and RSV all reflect the Erasmian interpretation.

**[64]** In the Gospel of John, chapter 5:2. They think that *probatica piscina* should be taken together [meaning 'sheep-pond'], but *probatica* is the name of a place in which there was a pond.

**[65]** Chapter 11:9. *duodecim horae diei* ['twelve hours of the day'] is explained differently from the usual interpretation.[50]

**[66]** Acts, chapter 24:14. *patri et Deo* ['to the Father and to God'] instead of *patrio Deo* ['to the God of our fathers']. This has given rise to fearful confusion among the commentators.[51]

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50 Erasmus understands the image to be a cryptic expression of Jesus' confidence that his 'time' is fixed, and that if he goes to Jerusalem he cannot be destroyed before his time. The annotation (*nonne duodecim horae sunt*) was introduced in *1519*.

51 The Vulgate reads, 'my Father and God.' In the annotation (*deservio patri et Deo*) Erasmus satirically observed that Hugh of St Cher, reading the Vulgate, thought that Paul was here calling himself a son, not a servant, of God! The passage appeared again in 'Passages Manifestly Corrupt' #35 (*1519* and *1522* only).

# PASSAGES MANIFESTLY CORRUPT, A FEW CHOSEN AS THEY OCCURRED FROM COUNTLESS EXAMPLES

*Loca manifeste depravata, sed ex infinitis,*
*ut occurrebant, pauca decerpta*

This section deals with corruption in the text of the Vulgate. As in the other lists in this series, Erasmus stresses that what he has chosen to give us is only a small selection 'from countless examples,' but here he adds *ut occurrebant*, that is, 'as they occurred.' This may mean simply that the examples preserve the order of the New Testament.[1] But while it is generally the case that the scriptural sequence is followed, it is not followed rigorously throughout. Even if we discount the six examples at the end and regard them as an afterthought, we still have to account for the insertion of three references to Luke and Acts between Matthew and Mark, and a reference to 1 Timothy between examples from 1 and 2 Thessalonians. This of course may simply be attributed to the *incuria librariorum*, or to haste on the part of the compiler. There is certainly ample evidence of carelessness in the preparation of this list. Erasmus would hardly have been pleased to discover that in a piece castigating the Vulgate for textual corruption, his own text was, in several places, badly corrupted.[2] However, it is possible that in this instance the phrase *ut occurrebant* also carries a hint of randomness – the examples are selected 'as they cropped up.' Erasmus cannot have considered that this somewhat random list contained the most notable and significant errors that he had noted in the Vulgate.

The reader who turns to this list to gain some idea of Erasmus' merits as a textual critic is likely to be disappointed.[3] Nearly half his examples are of fairly obvious scribal slips that call for no great expertise to correct, like *appropinquabit* for *appropinquavit* (Matthew 3:2), *audire* for *adire* (Luke 8:19), or *compellebantur* for *complebantur* (Luke 8:23). What such entries reveal is not so much the author's prowess as an editor as the extraordinary number of errors in the text – or texts – of the Vulgate that he had before him; this in itself was a strong argument in favour of a new and revised translation. Moreover,

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1 This is the meaning given to the phrase in CWE 56 258–9 n10, annotation on Rom 9:10 ('from intercourse one time only').

2 See the notes on Luke 8:49 (#7), Acts 1:15 (#8), John 5:2 (#26), Rom 14:22 (#45), Rom 16:14 (#47), Eph 6:13 (#66), James 3:7 (#76), 1 Pet 3:8 (#79) – a remarkable number of printing errors in such a short piece.

3 There have been varying assessments of Erasmus' accomplishments as a textual critic. H.J. de Jonge pronounces his criticism 'a failure'; 'The Character of Erasmus' Translation of the New Testament as Reflected in His Translation of Hebrews 9' *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 14 (1984) 81–7. D.F.S. Thomson has a somewhat more positive assessment; see his 'Erasmus and Textual Scholarship in the Light of Sixteenth-Century Practice' in *Erasmus of Rotterdam: The Man and the Scholar* ed. J. Sperna Weiland and W.T.M. Frijhoff (Leiden 1988) 158–71.

as he points out, even small slips, such as *blasphemiae* for *blasphemia* (Matthew 12:31), have led to serious misinterpretations of the text.

To correct the Vulgate, Erasmus relied heavily on the evidence of his Greek manuscripts. Here he encountered another difficulty. He chose as the basis of his Greek text three twelfth–century manuscripts, which were readily available to him in Basel.[4] Unhappily, all of these manuscripts belonged to the inferior Byzantine branch of the stemma. The Vulgate, on the other hand, shows awareness of a superior tradition, but Erasmus' confidence in his Greek manuscripts led him to 'correct' readings in the Vulgate that in fact were better attested. Thus he followed his Greek manuscripts at Romans 16:5, favouring *Achaiae* over the Vulgate's *Asiae*, which is the accepted reading. A similar problem caused by relying on an inferior tradition bedevilled Erasmus' great edition of Jerome and prevented him from establishing the text on a sound basis.[5]

But however disappointing this list may be to the textual critic, there is much here to commend. Erasmus' strength lay in his extraordinary command of Latin and in his sensitivity to the niceties of language. Take, for example, his strictures on the spelling *bithalassum*, which, he points out, is a hybrid form composed of both Greek and Latin elements. Some of Erasmus' changes are offered not so much as corrections of a corrupted text as suggestions for a more elegant rendering of the Greek: eg *excidimus* for *excedimus* at 2 Corinthians 5:13, *assectatus* for *assecutus* at 1 Timothy 4:6. One of Erasmus' gifts as a critic was a sharp nose for the spurious. The New Testament offered less scope than Jerome or Seneca for the exercise of this faculty: the only examples here are of intrusive glosses, for example, *modicas* as a gloss on *non quaslibet*, which had been grafted onto the text of Acts 19:11. As a critic, Erasmus recognized the importance of manuscripts and the need to assess their antiquity and characteristic paleographical errors; he understood the principle of the *lectio difficilior*; he was quick to spot readings that were out of harmony with grammar, style, or context; and he was astute in seeing how a revised punctuation could bring clarity to a confused text. We can see him at work in dealing with a verse like James 3:7. First, he turns to the Greek manuscripts, which read *ἐναλίων* 'of sea creatures'; the Vulgate's *ceterorum* 'of the rest' cannot therefore be right. His first suggestion is to suppose that the Translator was working from a text that had *ἄλλων* 'of the others'; as a

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4 E.J. Kenney *The Classical Text* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London 1974) 76–7

5 See Fritz Husner 'Die Handschrift des Scholien des Erasmus von Rotterdam zu den Hieronymusbriefen' *Festschrift Gustav Binz* (Basel 1935) 132–46.

second solution, he suggests that the Vulgate had the correct Greek text and translated it by the Latin word *cetorum* 'of large sea animals,' which was later corrupted into the puzzling *ceterorum*. All this is explained in the annotation on the verse and repeated in part in this list. Unfortunately, the effect in the list is spoiled by a printer's error that produced *caeterum* 'but' instead of the less familiar *cetorum*. The suggestion that the Greek word was translated by *cetorum* may have occurred to Erasmus through the Homeric linking of the two words in *Odyssey* 4.443: *εἰναλίῳ παρὰ κήτεϊ* ['beside a creature of the sea'].

There can be no doubt that Erasmus' translation was a distinct improvement on the Vulgate in clarity, elegance, and accuracy, even though an unhappy choice of manuscripts and perhaps the haste with which he put the whole work together left serious inadequacies in his text.

AD

# PASSAGES MANIFESTLY CORRUPT, A FEW CHOSEN AS THEY OCCURRED FROM COUNTLESS EXAMPLES

**[1]** Matthew, chapter 3:2. *appropinquabit* ['will approach'] for *appropinquavit* ['has approached'], or rather *appropinquat* ['is approaching'], the sort of error almost constantly made by the copyists.

**[2]** Chapter 4:6. *angelis suis mandavit* ['He has given his angels charge'] for *mandabit* ['will give charge']; the copyist is making one error compensate for the other.[1]

**[3]** Chapter 8:26. *imperavit ventis* ['He ordered the winds'] for *increpavit* ['He rebuked']. They tripped over the same stone[2] at Luke, chapter 4:39: *imperavit febri* ['He commanded the fever'] for *increpavit* ['He rebuked'].

**[4]** Chapter 12:31. *spiritus autem blasphemiae* ['the spirit of blasphemy'] for *spiritus blasphemia* ['the blaspheming of the Spirit']. Here the wrong reading has misled modern commentators[3] into making an embarrassing mistake.

**[5]** Chapter 22:30.[4] *nubent et nubentur* ['shall marry and shall be given in marriage'] for *nubunt et nubuntur* ['marry and are given in marriage'].

**[6]** Chapter 23:25. *qui mundatis ... pleni estis* ['who make clean .... you are full']. A false reading for *plena sunt* ['They are full'].

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1 In the previous example the future is used for a perfect tense; here the perfect is substituted for the future tense.
2 This is a frequent image in Erasmus but is not included in the *Adagia*. It may go back to Prov 3:23 'Thy foot will not stumble.'
3 For the identity of the 'moderns' see 'Obscure Passages' #8 with n7.
4 Chapter 22:30 ... *nubuntur*] This entry was omitted in *1527*; cf 'Solecisms' #11 with n7.

**[7]** Luke,[5] chapter 8:49. *ad archisynagogum* ['to the ruler of the synagogue'] for *ab archisynagogo* ['from the ruler of the synagogue'].

**[8]** Acts, chapter 1:15. *erant*[6] *autem hominum* ['Now there were of men'] for *nominum*[7] ['of names'].

**[9]** Chapter 14: 24. *Italiam* ['Italy'] for *Attaliam* ['Attalia'][8]

**[10]** Mark, chapter 8:38. *qui me confessus fuerit* ['who shall have confessed me']. *Confessus* is a corruption of *confusus* ['(be) ashamed of'].

**[11]** Luke,[9] chapter 1:77. *in remissionem* ['for the remission'] for *in remissione* ['in the remission'], having the sense of *per remissionem* ['through the remission']

**[12]** Chapter 8:19. *et non poterant audire* ['They were not able to hear']. *Audire* ['hear'] is a corrupt reading for *adire* ['approach'].

**[13]** The same, verse 23. *compellebantur* ['compelled'] *for complebantur* ['filled']

**[14]** Chapter 9:4. *et inde ne exeatis* ['And do not go from there'] for *inde exeatis* ['Go from there']

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5 Luke … *archisynagogo*] This entry was omitted in *1527*. *Archisynagogum* is a Latin transliteration of the Greek equivalent, and is found in the Vulgate of Mark and some Lukan passages. Here, however (and in Luke 8:41) the Vulgate reads *principem synagogae* 'chief of the synagogue.' Erasmus explains the textual problem in the annotation on Luke 8:49 (*venit quidam ad principem synagogae*).

6 A slip in all three editions for *erat*, reading, 'There was a crowd of men altogether about one hunded and twenty.'

7 The Greek is *ονομάτων*, literally 'names.' Erasmus suggests that originally the Translator followed the Greek with the Latin equivalent *nominum*, both the Greek and the Latin word being used in the idiomatic sense of 'persons being counted.' So he suggests that *nominum* be restored to the text, and the manuscript reading *hominum* be regarded as a substitute by some ill-educated scribe who did not understand the idiomatic use of the noun. Cf the annotation on Acts 1:15 (*erat autem hominum*).

8 Attalia, a port on the southern coast of Asia Minor, now Antalya, Turkey

9 Luke … *per remissionem*] This entry was omitted in *1527*. LB (wrongly) reads *pro* for *per*.

**[15]** Chapter 10:1 and 17. Instead of *septuaginta* ['seventy'], we[10] have the reading *septuaginta duo* ['seventy-two'].[11]

**[16]** The same, verse 30. *suspiciens autem Iesus* ['Jesus looking up'] for *suscipiens* ['answering']. The Greek is *ὑπολαβών*.

**[17]** Chapter 12:52. *et duo in tres dividentur* ['And two shall be divided against three']. We have ruined the sense by faulty punctuation.[12]

**[18]** Chapter 14:12. *neque vicinos, neque divites* ['neither neighbours nor the rich']. We ought to read *neque vicinos divites* ['neither rich neighbours'], for there was no danger from poor neighbours that they would invite you in turn to a feast.[13]

**[19]** Chapter 15:8. *evertit* ['overthrow'] for *everrit* ['sweeps out'] or *verrit* ['sweeps'], for the Greek is *σαροί*. That mistake is embedded in even the oldest manuscripts.[14]

**[20]** The same, verse 14. *consummasset* ['had completed'] has been written for *consumpsisset* ['had spent'].

**[21]** The same, verse 30. *devoravit substantiam suam* ['has devoured his substance'] for *substantiam tuam* ['your substance']

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10 By 'we' Erasmus means our texts of the Vulgate.

11 There is good manuscript evidence for both readings. Erasmus made the case for 'seventy' in his annotation on Luke 10:1 (*et alios septuaginta duos*), an annotation of special interest because of a *1535* addition that discredited the authority of the Codex Vaticanus; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 372 with n1606.

12 Erasmus, following his Greek text, punctuates after *in tres* and writes *dividetur* for VG *dividentur*, giving the reading, 'There will be five in one house, three against two and two against three. Father will be divided against son …'

13 I have translated Erasmus' comment in the sense that he clearly intended, as his annotation makes clear, rather than what strict adherence to classical grammar would demand.

14 Erasmus may mean the manuscripts from St Paul's, London; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 28 with n146. Weber 1638 reads *everrit* and cites as variants *vertit* and *evertit*.

**[22]** Chapter 16:22. *et sepultus est in inferno* ['And he was buried in hell']. Bad punctuation has ruined the sense, for after 'he was buried' there is a colon in the Greek.[15]

**[23]** Chapter[16] 23:40. *qui in eadem damnatione es* ['you who are under the same condemnation']. *Qui* ['who'] is a corruption for *quia* or *quod* ['because'].

**[24]** John 1:28. *haec in Bethania facta sunt* ['These things were done in Bethany']. 'Bethany' is a corrupt reading for 'Bethabara.'[17]

**[25]** The same, verse 29. *qui tollit peccata mundi* ['who takes away the sins of the world']. But it should be *peccatum mundi* ['the sin of the world'].

**[26]** Chapter 5:2. *Bethsaida* ['Bethsaida'] instead of *Bethseda*[18]

**[27]** Chapter 7:1.[19] *non volebat* ['He did not wish'] for *non valebat*, that is, 'he was not able.'

**[28]** Chapter 11:4. *ut glorificetur filius Dei per eum* ['that the Son of God be glorified through him']. But the proper reading is *per eam* ['through it'], that is, his weakness.

**[29]** Chapter[20] 18:28. *ad Caipham* ['to Caiaphas'] for *a Caiapha* ['from Caiaphas']. Augustine went astray over this passage.

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15 Thus giving the reading, 'He died and was buried. In hell he lifted up his eyes …'
16 Chapter…*quod*] This entry was omitted in *1527*.
17 Bethabara, where John was baptizing. 'Bethabara' is the reading of inferior manuscripts, followed by AV. The evidence for VG 'Bethany' is stronger.
18 This is the reading in all three editions of this piece, but it is clear from the annotation on the verse that Erasmus intended to write 'Bethesda.' The error is corrected in LB.
19 Cited as 7:2 in LB
20 Chapter … passage.] This entry was omitted in *1527*, presumably because it already appeared in 'Obscure Passages'; cf 'Obscure Passages' #23 with n20, where Augustine is cited and the citation identified.

**[30]** Chapter 21:22. *sic eum volo manere* ['So I wish him to remain'] for *si eum volo manere* ['if I wish him to remain'][21]

**[31]** Acts, chapter 15:16. *dirupta* ['broken apart'] written for *diruta* ['broken down']

**[32]** The same, immediately following. *suffusa* ['suffused'] for *suffossa* ['undermined'][22]

**[33]** Chapter 16:1. *vidua* ['widow'] is written for *Iudaea* ['Jewish woman'].

**[34]** Chapter 19:11. *virtutesque non modicas quaslibet* ['no ordinary deeds of any sort whatever']. The scribe has combined two readings.[23]

**[35]** Chapter[24] 24:14. *patri et Deo meo* ['to the Father and my God'] for *patrio Deo meo* ['to the God of my fathers']

**[36]** Chapter 27:8. *civitas Thalassa* ['the city of Thalassa'] for *civitas Lassaea* ['the city of Lasea']

**[37]** The same, verse 41.[25] *in locum bithalassum* for *dithalassum*, meaning 'of two seas'[26]

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21 Erasmus addresses the textual problem of John 21:22 in an annotation (*sic cum volo manere*) that eventually became more than two pages in length but is particularly noteworthy for its portrait of Augustine in comparison with Jerome (*1516* only); cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 79 with n314.

22 *Suffusa* is clearly a corruption of *suffossa*. *Suffossa* and *diruta* in the previous example do not translate two different words in the original but are alternative versions of the same Greek participle *κατεσκαμμένα*. *dirupta* is the reading of the Vulgate text printed by Erasmus in *1527*. James' speech is based on the prophecy of Amos in Amos 9:11–12.

23 Erasmus conjectures that a scribe has combined the true reading 'not just miracles of any sort' with the gloss *modicas* 'ordinary.'

24 Chapter … *meo*] This entry was omitted in *1527*. It appears in 'Obscure Passages' #66.

25 Cited as 'v42' in LB

26 *dithalassum* is a Greek word transliterated into Latin, but corrupted in the process, since the Translator used the the Latin prefix *bi-* (meaning 'two' or 'twice') instead of the Greek *di-*. In any case, he should have translated the Greek word by the perfectly good Latin word *bimaris*.

**[38]** Chapter 28:11. *insigne castrorum* ['the sign of the camp'] for *insigne Castorum* ['the sign of the Castores'], that is, Castor and Pollux[27]

**[39]** The[28] Epistle to the Romans, chapter 3:4. *est* ['is'] for *esto* ['let him be']

**[40]** Chapter 8:7. *sapientia carnis inimica est* ['The wisdom of the flesh is hostile'] for *inimicitia est* ['is hostility'][29]

**[41]** Chapter 9:10. *ex uno concubitu* ['from intercourse one time only'] for *ex uno concubitum habens* ['having intercourse with one'], where a corrupt reading leads to a wrong interpretation.

**[42]** Chapter 10:5. *Moses enim scripsit* ['For Moses wrote'], a corrupt passage, which, however, cannot be settled in a few words.[30]

**[43]** Chapter 12:19. *mihi vindictam* ['vengeance for me'] for *mihi vindicta* ['vengeance (belongs) to me'][31] or *mea est vindicta* ['vengeance is mine']

**[44]** Chapter 13:12. *nox praecessit* ['Night preceded'] for *processit* ['proceeded'], that is, 'advanced'

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27 The twins Castor and Pollux are often referred to as 'Castores.' They were believed to help sailors in distress.

28 The … *esto*] This entry was omitted in *1527*. The omission is noteworthy in light of the insistence elsewhere on the corruption: from *1519* to *1527* the marginal note beside the annotation ('but [God] is [true]') merely identifies the issue: '*est* for *esto*.' In *1527* the subject index adds, '*est* for *esto*, our reading is corrupt'; in *1535* both marginal note and subject index have '*est* for *esto*, our reading is corrupt.' Cf the annotation on Rom 3:4 ('but [God] is true').

29 Eramus supposes that an original *inimicitia* became *inimica*; cf the annotation on Rom 8:7 ('is hostile to God').

30 Cf the lengthy annotation on Rom 10:5 ('for Moses wrote'), much of it added in *1535*. The Vulgate had translated: Moses wrote that the man who does the justice of the Law will live in it; Erasmus translated: 'Moses writes concerning the justice of the Law that the man who does these things will live by them.'

31 Weber 1764 reads *vindictam* (accusative in indirect discourse after 'it is written'), but cites *vindicta* as a variant, assuming nominative in direct speech.

**[45]** Chapter 14:22. *tu fidem quam habes, in teipso habes*[32] ['The faith that you have, you have in yourself'] for *tu fidem habes: in teipso habe* ['You have faith; have it in yourself']

**[46]** Chapter 16:5.[33] The text has *Asiae* ['of Asia'] instead of *Achaiae* ['of Achaia'].

**[47]** The same,[34] verse 14. *Asineretum*[35] for *Asyncritum* ['Asyncritus']

**[48]** The First Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 1:10. *in eadem scientia* ['in the same knowledge'] for *in eadem sententia* ['in the same opinion']

**[49]** Chapter 2:8. *numquam* ['never'] for *nequaquam* ['by no means']

**[50]** Chapter[36] 8:10. *idolotica* for *idolothyta* ['of idols']

**[51]** Chapter 11:24. *quod pro vobis tradetur* ['which will be handed over for you'] for *pro vobis frangitur* ['is broken for you'][37]

**[52]** Chapter 12:3. *dicit anathema Iesu* ['says anathema to Jesus'] for *dicit anathema Iesum* ['calls Jesus anathema']

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32 *habes* is clearly a printer's error for *habe*, although it appears in all three editions of this piece. Since *habe* is the reading of the Vulgate, including the version of the Vulgate published by Erasmus in *1527*, it must be what he intended here: 'The faith that you have, have in yourself [before God].'

33 Cited as 16:6 in LB. *Asiae* is, however, the 'accepted reading'; cf the Translator's Note 903 above.

34 The same … *Asyncritum*] This entry was omitted in *1527*.

35 *Asineretum* is another printing error, found in *1519* and *1522*, and repeated in LB. Erasmus intended to give the Vulgate reading in the form *Asincretum*.

36 Chapter … *idolothyta*] This entry was omitted in *1527*. In the Vulgate of *1527* the word is spelled *idolothita*, a transliteration of the Greek word spelled with an 'i' instead of the correct 'y.' But the Vulgate varied: the *Gloss* (Froben-Petri) has *idolatica*.

37 This entry was omitted in *1527*. In the two earlier editions the passage appeared again in the final index, 'Where the Translator Presumed' #8; cf the discussion there.

**[53]** The same, verse 26. *gloriatur* ['glories'] for *glorificatur* ['is honoured'], translating the Greek *δοξάζεται*

**[54]** Chapter 14:2. *spiritus loquitur* ['The Spirit speaks'] for *spiritu loquitur* ['He speaks by the Spirit']

**[55]** The same, verse 16. *quis supplet locum idiotae* ['Who holds the place of the unlearned?'] for *qui supplet* ['he who holds']. The addition of a single letter ['s'] has ruined both sense and punctuation.

**[56]** The same, verse 23. *quid insanitis* ['Why are you mad?'] for *quod insanitis* ['that you are mad']

**[57]** Chapter 15:26. *novissime autem inimica* ['and last of all, the enemy'] for *novissima autem inimica* ['and the last enemy']

**[58]** The same, verse 31. *propter vestram gloriam* ['on account of your glory'] for *per nostram gloriam* ['by my glory'], as in an oath; and this false reading has perverted the meaning entirely.[38]

**[59]** The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 1:13. *legistis et cognovistis* ['You have read and known'] for *legitis et cognoscitis* ['You read and know']

**[60]** Chapter 5:13. *excedimus* ['We go out'] for *excidimus* ['We lost control'], since the Greek is *ἐξέστημεν*

**[61]** Chapter 8:8. *ingenium* ['disposition'] for *ingenuum*, that is, *ingenuitas* ['sincerity']

**[62]** Chapter 12:16. *sed esto, ego vos gravavi* ['But so be it! I have burdened you'] for *esto, ego vos non gravavi* ['So be it! I have not burdened you'][39]

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38 *propter*, the reading of the *1527* Vulgate, also of the *Gloss* (Froben-Petri) is fairly widely attested (cf Weber 1787 with 31n). *Per*, however, is clearly the correct reading (cf RSV 'I protest by my pride'). Erasmus' emendation *nostram* captures the sense of the passage but is unnecessary, since the same meaning can be obtained by *vestram*, if taken objectively: 'my boasting in you.'

39 In spite of a marginal note pointing to this passage as one with a 'manifest fault,' both the *1527* Vulgate and the *Gloss* (Froben-Petri) read with ER the *non*, as does Weber 1801 (without variants).

**[63]** To the Galatians, chapter 2:11. *quoniam reprehensibilis erat* ['since he was blameworthy'] for *reprehensus erat* ['had been blamed']

**[64]** Chapter 4:18. *bonum autem aemulamini* ['Be zealous for the good'] for *bonum autem aemulari* ['It is good to be zealous']

**[65]** To the Ephesians, chapter 2:15. *decretis evacuans* ['making void by decrees'] for *in decretis* ['in decrees']. Here the omission of the preposition produces total nonsense.[40]

**[66]** Chapter 6:13. *et in omnibus perfecti stare* ['and to stand perfect in all things'] for *perfecte stare* ['to stand perfectly'][41]

**[67]** The Epistle[42] to the Thessalonians, chapter 2:4. *ut crederetur a nobis* ['that it should be entrusted by us']; *a* ['by'] is redundant and spoils the sense.[43]

**[68]** The Epistle[44] to the Thessalonians, chapter 1:6. *retribuere retributionem* ['to repay retribution'] for *retribuere afflictionem* ['to repay tribulation'][45]

**[69]** The First Epistle to Timothy, chapter 4:6. *assecutus* ['pursued'] for *assectatus* ['adhered to'][46]

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40 Cf the annotation on Eph 2:15 (*decretis evacuans*): 'The omission of the preposition *in* produces total nonsense – as though he has abolished the Law by decrees; rather he abolished the Law that consisted of precepts and decrees' ASD VI-9 194:472–4.

41 This is a slip, which is repeated in all editions. The annotation on Eph 6:13 (*et in omnibus perfecti stare*) makes it clear that Erasmus intended to write *omnibus perfectis stare* 'when all has been done, to stand.'

42 The Epistle] In *1519* and *1522*; in *1527*, 'The First Epistle'

43 The intended sense is 'should be entrusted to us.'

44 The Epistle] In *1519* and *1522*; in *1527*, 'The Second Epistle'

45 Erasmus regarded VG *retributionem* as a copyist's error, 'especially since the very old manuscript in St Paul's reads *retribuere tribulationem* ['repay affliction'] …'; cf the annotation on 2 Thess 1:6 (*retribuere retributionem*).

46 In his annotation on 1 Tim 4:6 (*quam assecutus es*) Erasmus defines the difference between these two verbs as follows: *assequi* means 'to follow with the intention of catching up'; *assectari* means 'to keep on following' and is therefore closer to the Greek. *assequor* can also mean 'attain to,' which is the basis of the translation in DV. Cf 'Errors Made by the Translator' #5, with n4 below, where Erasmus refers to the word in Luke 1:3, on which he engaged in an important discussion.

**[70]** The Epistle[47] to the Thessalonians, chapter 3:14. *per epistolam hanc* ['by this epistle']. One should read *hunc* ['this man'], not *hanc*.

**[71]** The First Epistle to Timothy, chapter 2:15. *si manserit* ['if she continues'] for *si manserint* ['if they continue'], where a corrupt reading has corrupted the whole meaning also.[48]

**[72]** The Second Epistle to Timothy, chapter 4:21. *et fratres eius* ['and his brothers'] for *et fratres omnes* ['and all the brethren']

**[73]** To the Hebrews, chapter 2:10. *decebat enim consummari* ['for it became him to be made perfect'] is a scribal error for *consummare* ['to make perfect'].

**[74]** Chapter 13:2. *placuerunt angelis hospitio acceptis* ['They pleased the angels whom they entertained']. We have commented on this earlier.[49]

**[74a]** The Epistle[50] of James, chapter 2:13. *superexaltat* ['exalts above'] for *superexultat* ['exults over']

**[75]** The Epistle of James, chapter 3:7.[51] *caeterorum* ['of the rest'] for *caeterum*[52] ['but']

**[76]** Chapter 5:6. *adduxistis* ['You have brought'] for *addixistis* ['You have condemned']

**[77]** The First Epistle of Peter, chapter 2:5. *domus spirituales* ['spiritual houses'] for *domus spiritualis* ['a spiritual house']

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47 The Epistle] In *1519* and *1522*; in *1527*, 'The Second Epistle'
48 Erasmus refers the plural to the children: 'if they [the children] remain'; cf the annotation on 1 Tim 2:15 (*si permanserit*).
49 Cf 'Obscure Passages' #52.
50 The Epistle … *superexultat*] This entry was added in *1527*.
51 Cited as 3:12 in LB
52 Again, a typographical error at this point in 'Passages Manifestly Corrupt' (all three editions); cf #45 n32. The word intended was not *caeterum* as printed but *cetorum* ['of large sea animals']. The Greek is *ἐναλίων* 'creatures of the sea,' and the marginal note beside the annotation on James 3:7 (*et caeterorum*) reads *caeterorum pro cetorum*. Cf Translator's Note 903–4 above.

**[78]** Chapter 3:8. *in fine autem* ['and in the end'] for *in finem* ['to the end'] or *in summa* ['in sum'][53]

**[79]** The same, verse 18. *mortificatos carne* ['(we) being mortified in the flesh'] for *mortificatus carne* ['(he) being mortified in the flesh'][54]

**[80]** Chapter 5:13. *in Babylone collecta* ['in Babylon collected'] for *in Babylone coelecta* ['in Babylon elected with']

**[81]** Epistle of Jude, verse 9. *imperet tibi Deus* ['Let God command you'] for *increpet te Deus* ['Let God rebuke you']

**[82]** Matthew 1:18. *mater Iesu Maria* ['Mary, mother of Jesus'] for *mater eius Maria* 'Mary, his mother']

**[83]** Again, verse 23. *et vocabitur nomen eius* ['And his name shall be called'] for *vocabunt nomen eius* ['They shall call his name']

**[84]** Chapter 5:24. *reconciliari fratri tuo* ['to be reconciled to your brother'] instead of *reconciliare* ['be reconciled']

**[85]** Chapter 26:75. *quod dixerat* ['that he had said'] for *qui dixerat* ['who had said']

**[86]** Mark 11:32. *timemus populum* ['We fear the people'] for *timebant populum* ['They feared the people']

**[87]** Luke 1:9. *sorte exiit* ['By lot he went out'] for *sors exiit* ['The lot fell on']

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53 See 'Obscure Passages' #57 for an earlier entry of 1 Pet 3:8, where, however, Erasmus objected to the Vulgate variant reading *in fide* rather than the preferred reading, as here, *in fine*. The gloss *in finem* is an aberration.

54 Cf 'Obscure Passages' #58 with n44.

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TO PACIFY THOSE WHO THINK
THAT IN THE SACRED BOOKS
THERE IS NOTHING SUPERFLUOUS
AND NOTHING LACKING,
I HAVE SELECTED CERTAIN PASSAGES
WHERE FAULTS OF THIS SORT ARE
TOO OBVIOUS TO BE DENIED

*Ad placandos eos, qui putant in sacris libris*
*nihil neque superesse, neque deesse, quaedam excerpsimus,*
*quae manifestius depravata sunt in hoc genere,*
*quam ut negari possit.*

Three things stand out in this brief list. First, the polemical tone. The 'sacred books' of the long title are the books of the Vulgate New Testament, and the target of the attack must be that ultraconservative opinion that would not countenance any change in the Vulgate, since it was the text that had been approved by the church for centuries and on which general councils had based their pronouncements on matters of faith.[1] Second, here again one can observe the importance Erasmus attached to the evidence of the Fathers for the establishment of the text. Finally, a word about the quality of the examples cited. Several deal with rather small points – the omission or addition of an 'and' or an 'even.' But at a more serious level, many are in fact not careless omissions or additions to the Vulgate text but evidence that the Translator was working from a Greek text different and often superior to that found in the manuscripts used by Erasmus. The first entry in this list is a good example: here the Vulgate reading has better support than the text favoured by Erasmus.

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1 Cf Maarten van Dorp's cautionary letter to Erasmus, Ep 304:107–22, and Erasmus' response in Ep 337:750–8, 806–28.

# TO PACIFY THOSE WHO THINK THAT IN THE SACRED BOOKS THERE IS NOTHING SUPERFLUOUS AND NOTHING LACKING, I HAVE SELECTED CERTAIN PASSAGES WHERE FAULTS OF THIS SORT ARE TOO OBVIOUS TO BE DENIED

**[1]** Matthew, chapter 2:18. *ploratus et ululatus* ['weeping and wailing'], when the Greek manuscripts have 'lamentation, weeping, and tears.' Jerome cites it in this form, in accordance both with the Septuagint and the original Hebrew.[1]

**[2]** Chapter 3:10. *iam enim securis* ['for now the axe']; we should read with the Greek, 'for now also the axe.'

**[3]** Chapter 12:18. Jerome shows that something has been omitted from Isaiah's prophecy.[2]

**[4]** Chapter 16:13. *quem dicunt homines esse filium hominis* ['Who do men say that the Son of Man is?']; in the Greek, however, and in old manuscripts[3] it is *quem me dicunt esse ...?* ['Who do they say that I am ...?'].

**[5]** Chapter 27:43. *liberet eum si vult* ['Let him deliver him if he wishes']; the reading should be *si vult eum* ['if he will have him'].[4]

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1 Matthew's words are cited from Jer 31:15; Jerome *Commentarius in Hieremiam prophetam* 6 (on 31:15). In his commentary, however, Jerome notes that Matthew cited this passage according to neither the Hebrew nor the Septuagint, but as a Hebrew speaker Matthew expressed the Hebrew in his own words.

2 Cf the annotation on Matt 12:18 (*ecce puer meus*), where Erasmus, reporting Jerome, shows that Matthew has omitted Isa 42:4a and notes that Jerome attributes this omission to scribal error, ASD VI-5 213:506–214:525; cf Jerome *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* 9 (on 42:3b–4a); cf also Jerome Ep 121.2–5.

3 In his annotation on Matt 16:3 (*quem dicunt homines*) Erasmus mentions in particular a Latin codex from the library of St Paul's in London; cf 'Passages Manifestly Corrupt' #19 with n14.

4 The Matthean text reflects Ps 22:8 (VG, LXX 22:9) 'Let him deliver him … for he delights in him.' In Matt 27:43 Erasmus' Greek text, like the Septuagint of the Psalms, added the pronoun 'him'; the Vulgate text, like the Vulgate of the Psalms, omitted it.

**[6]** Mark, chapter 1:27. *quia in potestate spiritibus imperat* ['for with authority he commands the spirits']; it should be *et spiritibus imperat* ['he commands even the spirits'].

**[7]** Luke, chapter 4:21. *impleta est scriptura* ['the Scripture is fulfilled']; it should be *scriptura haec* ['this Scripture'].

**[8]** Chapter 7:35. *a filiis suis* ['by her children']; it should be *ab omnibus filiis suis* ['by all her children'], following the Greek text and Ambrose, who also translates it in this way.[5]

**[9]** John, chapter 1:16. *et gratiam pro gratia* ['and grace for grace']. The 'and' is redundant.[6]

**[10]** Chapter 3:31. *qui de terra est, de terra loquitur* ['He that is of the earth speaks of the earth']; it should be *qui de terra est, de terra est, et de terra loquitur* ['He that is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth'].

**[11]** Chapter 6:42. *nonne hic est filius Ioseph?* ['Is not this the son of Joseph?']; but according to the Greek and to Augustine,[7] we should read, *Nonne hic est Iesus, filius Ioseph?* ['Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph?'].

**[12]** Epistle to the Romans, chapter 12:6. *habentes donationes* ['having gifts']; we should read *habentes autem donationes* ['however, having gifts']. The omission of the conjunction ruins the sense.[8]

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5 Ambrose *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam* 6.6 (on 7:35)

6 Erasmus, however, includes the word in both text and translation in all editions, and in his annotation on the word (*de plenitudine eius accepimus et gratiam pro gratiam*) shows that the textual witnesses support the inclusion of the word. In fact, it was only in Chrysostom that he had found an interpretation that suggested the 'and' was redundant.

7 Augustine *In Iohannis evangelium tractatus* 26.1

8 The conjunction *autem* is present in most Vulgate manuscripts and is included in the *1527* Vulgate and the *Gloss* (Froben-Petri); cf the annotation on Rom 12:6 ('having gifts') CWE 56 330 with n6. In his translation Erasmus sharpened the distinction intended by replacing VG *autem* with *sed tamen* 'but nevertheless,' 'but yet.'

**[13]** First Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 7:35. *quod honestum est, et facultatem praebeat dominum sine impedimento obsecrandi* ['that which is decent and may give you power to entreat the Lord without distraction'][9]

**[14]** Chapter 9:10. *et qui triturat* ['and he that threshes']. Something is missing in our text.[10]

**[15]** Epistle to the Galatians, chapter 3:17. *testamentum confirmatum a Deo, etc* ['the covenant confirmed by God, etc']. According to the Greek and to Ambrose,[11] the words *in Christum* ['in Christ'] are missing.

**[16]** First Epistle to the Thessalonians, chapter 3:2. *ministrum Dei* ['minister of God']. According to the Greek and to Ambrose,[12] the phrase *et cooperarium nostrum* ['and our fellow labourer'] is missing.

**[17]** Epistle to Philemon, verse 6. *in Christo Iesu, etc* ['in Christ Jesus, etc']. Before these words the phrase *quod est in nobis* ['which is in us'] is missing,[13] as is evident from the Greek codices, Chrysostom, Ambrose, and Jerome.[14]

**[18]** First Epistle of Peter, chapter 4:14. The Greek shows that there are things missing in our text.[15]

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9 There is no comment on this in any of the three editions of 'To Pacify.' But in his annotation on 1 Cor 7:35 (*quod honestum est, et quod facult. praeb.*) Erasmus explains that, according to Jerome, the phrase was omitted from the Latin manuscripts because the Greek was difficult to translate; cf Jerome *Ad Iovinianum* 1.13.

10 The sense of the Vulgate's reading is 'and he that thresheth, in hope to receive fruit' (DV), while the Greek text means, 'And he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope' (AV).

11 Ambrosiaster *Commentarius in epistolam ad Galatas* (on 3:17)

12 Ambrosiaster *Commentarius in epistolam ad Thessalonicenses primam* (on 3:2)

13 Ie missing from the Vulgate. Greek manuscripts vary between 'which is in you' and 'which is in us.' Erasmus selects the former for his own translation.

14 Chrysostom *In epistolam ad Philemonem homiliae* 2 (on verse 6); Ambrosiaster *Commentarius in epistolam ad Philemonem* (on verse 6); Jerome *Commentarius in epistolam ad Philemonem* (on verse 6).

15 In his annotation on 1 Pet 4:14 (*nemo autem vestrum pati.*) Erasmus notes the omission in the Latin of a phrase meaning, 'On their part he is reviled, but on your part he is glorified.' In fact, the preferred text, both Greek and Latin, omits the words.

**[18a]** Matthew,[16] chapter 26:60. The phrase *et non invenerunt* ['And they found not'] is repeated in the Greek codices.[17]

**[18b]** Mark, chapter 10:21. *et veni sequere me* ['And come, follow me']. The Greek codices add ἆρας τὸν σταυρόν, that is, 'Take up the cross.'[18]

**[18c]** Acts, chapter 2:30.[19] *de fructu lumbi eius* ['of the fruit of his loins']. There is more in the Greek than in the Latin.[20]

16 Matthew … Latin.] These three concluding entries were added in *1527*.

17 Thus Erasmus translated, 'They did not find [evidence]. Even though many false witnesses came, they did not find [evidence].' But the preferred text in the Greek does not repeat the words.

18 In his annotation on Mark 10:21 (*et veni sequere me*) Erasmus expressed doubts in *1527* about the authenticity of the words he here considers lacking.

19 The reference is erroneously cited by Erasmus as 'chapter 3.'

20 The Vulgate reads: 'God would seat one of his descendants upon the throne'; Erasmus' Greek text (from *1519*) read with the 'added words': 'God would raise up and seat one of his descendants, Christ according to the flesh, upon the throne.'

# INTERPOLATIONS IN OUR TEXTS

*Index eorum quae sint addita in nostris exemplaribus*

'Our texts' in this title must refer to the Vulgate. This is a list of passages where Erasmus, by collating the Latin translation with his Greek manuscripts and with scriptural citations in the Fathers, finds evidence of interpolation. Interpolations are a subset of the general category of textual corruptions and are therefore open to the same critical problems as we noted above in 'Passages Manifestly Corrupt.' Here again, the limitations of the Greek manuscripts that Erasmus relied on have led to mistaken judgments; for example, at Matthew 6:25 the phrase 'what you will drink' was apparently not supported by Erasmus' texts and was therefore judged an interpolation, though in fact it has some manuscript authority. One of the striking features of this list is the number of references to the Fathers. A glance at the notes appended to the piece will reveal in a graphic way the importance that Erasmus attached to biblical citations in the Fathers as evidence for the development of the text.

There is no discernible order in the arrangement of the examples cited. Erasmus does not follow the scriptural sequence, nor is there any obvious principle of classification. But the interpolations of which Erasmus complains can be arranged broadly into four classes:

**1/** Harmless supplements, for example, 1 Corinthians 6:20, where 'at a price' in the Greek text is translated as 'at a great price.'

**2/** Additions intended to clarify, as at 1 Corinthians 7:14, where the Vulgate has 'believing wife' rather than simply 'wife,' the full meaning being understood from the context.

**3/** Additions intended to smooth the syntax or simplify a long sentence. Erasmus points out that many of these 'simplifications' merely distort the syntax, for example Ephesians 2:1 (#1 and note 1) and 1 John 2:16 (#3), where the Vulgate's addition of *quae* spoils both sense and grammar.

**4/** Suspected interpolations from other Gospels, for example, Luke 13:21 (#16); from the Old Testament, for example, Matthew 15:8 (#36 and note 60) and 27:35 (#44), where Erasmus sees interpolation from Psalm 21:19; from liturgical practice, for example, the addition of the doxology to the Lord's Prayer at Matthew 6:13 (#20), an importation from the Greek liturgy, according to Erasmus; and from other parts of Scripture or even from another passage in the same work, for example, the supposed interpolation at 1 Corinthians 4:16 from 1 Corinthians 11:1 (#24).

Although Erasmus is mainly concerned with interpolation in the Vulgate, he cites four passages where he believes that the Greek text was interpolated: Matthew 15:8 (#36), where he suggests contamination with Isaiah 19:13; Matthew 5:44 (#17); Matthew 6:13 (#20 and note 35); and John 8:59 (#61 and note 84).

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# INTERPOLATIONS IN OUR TEXTS

**[1]** Epistle to the Ephesians, chapter 2:1.[1] *et convivificavit* ['And he brought to life']. *Convivificavit* ['He brought to life'] is not in the Greek or Jerome[2] or Ambrose[3] or the oldest manuscripts.

**[2]** The same,[4] chapter 3:14. *huius rei gratia flecto genua mea ad patrem* ['For this cause I bow my knees to the Father']. Jerome[5] shows that the words 'of our Lord Jesus Christ' are an addition here.

**[3]** First[6] Epistle of John, chapter 2:16. *quae non est ex patre* ['which is not of the Father']. *Quae* ['which'] is redundant.[7]

**[4]** First Epistle to Timothy, chapter 2:6.[8] *cuius testimonium, etc* ['whose testimony']. *Cuius* and *confirmatum est* ['whose' and 'is confirmed'] are not in the Greek.

**[5]** Second Epistle to Timothy, chapter 2:22. *fidem, spem* ['faith, hope']. *spem* ['hope'] is not in the Greek or Ambrose[9] or the old manuscripts.

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1 The reference is given in LB as Eph 2:5, but in the text of the Vulgate that Erasmus was using, the verb was found also in Eph 2:1 and repeated in Eph 2:5. Erasmus suggests that the inclusion of the verb in the first verse was a commentator's attempt to clarify a long and complex sentence. The statement here is virtually a copy of the first sentence (*1519*) of the annotation on Eph 2:1 (*et vos convivificavit*).
2 Jerome *Commentarius in epistolam ad Ephesios* 1 (on 2:1)
3 Ambrosiaster *Commentarius in epistolam ad Ephesios* (on 2:1)
4 The same … here.] This entry was added in *1522* and was matched by the addition of a new annotation on Eph 3:14 (*ad patrem domini nostri Iesu Christi*).
5 Jerome *Commentarius in epistolam ad Ephesios* 2 (on 3:14)
6 First … redundant.] This entry was omitted in *1527*.
7 The Vulgate read, '… the pride of life which is not of the Father'; Erasmus read, '… the pride of life is not of the Father.'
8 Wrongly given in LB as 2 Tim 2:16. The *1527* Vulgate read, '… gave himself a ransom … whose testimony was confirmed in due time'; Erasmus read, '… who gave himself a ransom … a testimony in due time' (DV). However, the reading of the *1527* Vulgate is not widely attested and is not given as a variant in Weber 1832. Hence DV reads as Erasmus wishes.
9 Ambrosiaster *Commentarius in epistolam secundam ad Timotheum* (on 2:22)

**[6]** Chapter 2:25.[10] *qui resistunt veritati* ['who resist the truth']. *Veritati* ['the truth'] is redundant, as is clear from the Greek and from Ambrose.[11]

**[7]** Chapter 3:4.[12] *caeci* ['blind'] is redundant; it is not in the Greek or in the Old Latin texts, or in Chrysostom,[13] or Ambrose.[14]

**[8]** Epistle to the Colossians, chapter 1:19.[15] *omnem plenitudinem divinitatis* ['all fullness of divinity']. *Divinitatis* ['of divinity'] is otiose; it is not in the Greek or in Ambrose.[16]

**[9]** Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 4:14. *confessionem spei nostrae* ['confession of our hope']. *Spei nostrae* ['of our hope'] is not in the Greek or in Chrysostom[17] or in the oldest manuscripts.

**[10]** Chapter 5:8. *cum esset filius Dei* ['whereas he was the Son of God']. *Dei* ['of God'] is unnecessary, as appears from the Greek manuscripts and from the commentators Chrysostom[18] and Vulgarius.[19]

**[11]** Epistle to the Romans, chapter 8:38. *neque futura, neque fortitudo etc* ['nor things to come nor might, etc']. *Fortitudo* ['might'] is not in the Greek.

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10 Wrongly given in LB as 2 Tim 3:8
11 Ambrosiaster *Commmentarius in epistolam secundam ad Timotheum* (on 2:25)
12 Again, a false reference in LB as 2 Tim 3:3
13 Chrysostom *In epistolam secundam ad Timotheum homiliae* 8.1 (on 2 Tim 3:4)
14 Ambrosiaster *Commentarius in epistolam secundam ad Timotheum* (on 3:4). 'Blind' appears in the *1527* Vulgate among the characteristics of the evildoers, but is absent from DV and is not listed as a variant in Weber 1838. Cf *Ratio* 532 with n222.
15 Wrongly cited in LB as Col 1:9
16 Ambrosiaster *Commentarius in epistolam ad Colossenses* (on 3:4). The word appears in the *1527* Vulgate, but is absent from DV and is not listed as a variant in Weber 1821.
17 Chrysostom *In epistolam ad Hebraeos homiliae* 7.2 (on Heb 4:14)
18 Chrysostom *In epistolam ad Hebraeos homiliae* 8.1 (on Heb 5:8)
19 'Vulgarius': Twice in this index this commentator is named 'Vulgarius' (#10 and #29), twice 'Theophylact' (#21 and #31). The appearance of both names in the index in *1519* may suggest the work of a compiler other than Erasmus, but it is curious that Erasmus never corrected the name in the two later editions of the index, *1522* and *1527*. For the discovery of Vulgarius as Theophylact see 'New Testament Scholarship' 132 with n554. For the allusion see Theophylact *Commentarius in epistolam ad Hebraeos* (on Heb 5:8).

**[12]** Chapter 11:5. *salvae facta sunt, etc* ['have been saved, etc']. Two words are superfluous, *Dei* ['of God'] and *salvae* ['saved'].[20]

**[13]** First Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 6:20. *empti enim estis pretio magno* ['for you are bought with a great price']. *Magno* ['great'] is superfluous, as is shown by the Greek, Chrysostom,[21] and Ambrose.[22]

**[14]** Matthew,[23] chapter 9:22. 'Without cause' εἰκῇ must, according to Jerome, be eliminated, even if Chysostom does so read and interpret.[24]

**[15]** Luke, chapter 11:34. *lucerna corporis tui* ['the lamp of your body']. *Tui* ['your'] is an addition.[25]

**[16]** Chapter 13:21. *sata tria* ['three measures'] has been taken over into Luke from Matthew.[26]

**[17]** Matthew, chapter 5:44. *diligite inimicos vestros* ['Love your enemies']. There is more in the Greek than in our Latin text.[27]

**[18]** Epistle to the Romans, chapter 11:36. *honor et gloria* ['honour and glory']. *Honor* ['honour'] is redundant.

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20 Cf the annotation on Rom 11:5 ('has become saved') and the Latin texts: VG 'A remnant has become saved according to the election of the grace of God'; ER 'There has become a remnant according to the election of grace.'

21 Chrysostom *In epistolam primam ad Corinthios homiliae* 18.2 (on 1 Cor 6:20)

22 The apparatus criticus in Ambrosiaster CSEL 81/2 69 gives *magno* in some manuscripts but not in others.

23 Matthew … interpret.] This entry was omitted in *1522* and *1527*, but its equivalent appeared in *1527* in a group of additions just below; cf 'Interpolations' #19b. Chapter '9' is a mistake for chapter '5.'

24 Cf Jerome *Commentarius in evangelium Matthaei* 1 (on 5:22) PL 26 36C–D; and Chrysostom *In evangelium Matthaei homiliae* 16.1 and 5 (on 5:22).

25 This entry is repeated in #54 in the editions of 1519 and 1522. The repetition was removed in *1527*, cf [n79]. Cf #23 below where the same words are cited from Matthew.

26 Erasmus retains the two words in both the Greek text and the Latin translation. In his annotation on Luke 13:21 (*sata tria*) Erasmus supports his opinion that the words have been added from Matthew by appealing to the text and commentary of Ambrose.

27 Erasmus' text adds, 'Bless them that curse you' (so AV); the preferred text, however, omits the clause (so RSV).

**[19]** Epistle to the Ephesians, chapter 2:22. *in spiritu sancto* ['in the Holy Spirit']. *Sancto* is redundant, as is clear from the Greek manuscripts, and from Jerome and Ambrose.[28]

**[19a]** Matthew,[29] chapter 5:11. *cum male dixerint vobis homines* ['when men shall revile you']. *Homines* ['men'] is not in the Greek codices.[30]

**[19b]** Matthew, chapter 5:22. *qui irascitur fratri suo sine causa* ['who is angry with his brother without cause']. Jerome says that 'without cause' is not in the correct copies.[31]

**[19c]** Chapter 27:1. *principes sacerdotum et seniores populi* ['the chief priests and the elders of the people']. *Populi* ['of the people'] is redundant in our Vulgate Bibles.[32]

**[19d]** Acts, chapter 22:24. *et flagellis caedi et torqueri* ['and to be flogged with whips and tortured']. The Translator has added *et torqueri* ['and tortured'].

**[19e]** The First Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 14:33. *sicut in omnibus ecclesiis sanctorum doceo* ['as I teach in all the churches of the saints']. *Doceo* ['I teach'] seems to have been added at this point by our [translators].

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28 The comment repeats the annotation on Eph 2:22 (*in spiritu sancto*), where, however, Erasmus adds that the reading of Jerome and Ambrosiaster is clear from their exposition. Cf Jerome *Commentarius in epistolam ad Ephesios* 1 (on 2:22); and Ambrosiaster *Commentarius in epistolam ad Ephesios* (on 2:22).

29 Matthew…redundant] The entries 19a to 19h were all added in *1527*.

30 *homines* is present in the *1527* Vulgate; it is a variant in Weber 1531, but not rendered in DV, which reads (like Erasmus' Greek text), 'when they shall revile you.'

31 Cf 'Interpolations' #14 with n23.

32 Cf the *1527* annotation on Matt 27:1 (*principibus sacerdotum et senioribus populi*): '"Of the people" is not at this point added either in the Greek manuscripts or the *codex aureus* but is understood from the preceding passage.' Nevertheless, the expression is present both in Erasmus' Greek text and his translation, both of which, with the Vugate, read the text with nominatives rather than with the ablatives found in the cue phrase of the annotation.

**[19f]** 2 Corinthians, chapter 9:6. *hoc autem dico* ['But this I say']. The Translator has added *dico* ['I say'].[33]

**[19g]** Chapter 12:20. *sint inter vos* ['lest there be among you']. These words are not found in the Greek copies.[34]

**[19h]**The Epistle to Philemon 6. *omnis operis boni* ['of every good work']. 'Work' is redundant.

**[20]** Matthew, chapter 6:13. *quia tuum est regnum* ['for thine is the kingdom']. This addition in Matthew is found only in the Greek.[35]

**[21]** Epistle to the Romans, chapter 12:17. *providentes bona* ['providing good things']. In the Greek there is only 'before all men.' *Non solum coram Deo* ['not only before God'] is an addition. It is not in Origen[36] or in Theophylact.[37]

**[22]** First Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 7:14. *per mulierem fidelem* ['by the believing wife']. Some words have been added in our Latin texts.[38]

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33 In his translation Erasmus adds *dico* also, but in small print to indicate that it is not, strictly speaking, in the Greek (cf 'New Testament Scholarship 126 with n537), and in his annotation on 2 Cor 9:6 (*hoc autem dico*) he recognizes that the addition is made to express properly the sense.

34 The Greek reads, 'lest somehow there be contentions'; the Vulgate read, 'lest perhaps there be among you contentions.' But Erasmus recognized that the additional words facilitated the sense, and he himself added *sint* 'lest there be'; cf the annotation on 2 Cor 12:20 (*sint inter vos*).

35 The doxology is a later addition to the Lord's Prayer. Erasmus denied that it belonged to the gospel account, since it was found only in Greek manuscripts. Thus it represented an 'interpolation' into the Greek text, not into the Vulgate. Significant additions in *1519* and *1522* to the annotation on the verse (*quia tuum regnum est*), with further shorter additions in *1527* and *1535* responded to critics; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 45 with n197; and Rummel *Erasmus' Annotations* 135–6.

36 Cf the annotation on Rom 12:17 ('providing good things') CWE 56 340–1 with n3, which cites Origen *Commentarius in epistolam ad Romanos* 9.20 (on 12:17).

37 Theophylact *Commentarius in epistolam ad Romanos* (on 12:17)

38 The full phrase, as given in the Vulgate, means: 'The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife' (DV). Erasmus points out in his annotation on 1 Cor 7:14 (*per mulierem fidelem, per virum fidelem* 'through the believing wife,

**[23]** Matthew, chapter 6:22. *lucerna corporis tui* ['lamp of your body']. *Tui* ['your'] is redundant.[39]

**[24]** First Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 4:16. The clause *sicut et ego Christi* ['as I also am of Christ'] is not found in the Greek or in a manuscript from St Paul's[40] or in Ambrose.[41]

**[25]** Epistle to the Philippians, chapter 2:20. *tam unanimem* ['so like-minded']. *Tam* ['so'] in our Latin texts is redundant.

**[26]** Matthew, chapter 6:25. *animae vestrae* ['for your life']. A reference to 'what you will drink'[42] is not added in Chrysostom[43] or Hilary[44] or, with a few exceptions, in the Greek texts.

**[26a]** Matthew,[45] chapter 7:1. *nolite condemnare et non condemnabimini* ['Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned']. I have found these words in none of the Greek copies.[46]

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through the believing husband') that in both phrases the word 'believing' is not supported by the Greek manuscripts, although the sense is easily understood from the context.

39 Cf 'Interpolations' #15, where the same words are cited from Luke.

40 John Colet lent Erasmus two manuscripts of the Latin Bible from the library of St Paul's; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 28 with n146; cf 'Interpolations' #34 n58.

41 Ambrosiaster *Commentarius in epistolam primam ad Corinthios* (on 4:16)

42 In his annotation on Matt 6:25 (*quid bibatis*) Erasmus argues that in the passage 'Take no thought for what you will eat or what you will drink,' 'what you will drink' is otiose since 'drink' is implied under *cibus* (generally translated 'food'), and in any case water is available to all. He considers the phrase an interpolation; but he notes that it can be found in some manuscripts, and he keeps it in both his Greek and Latin texts. In fact, the expression is not added in the *1527* Vulgate or in the *Gloss* (Froben-Petri) and does not appear as a variant in Weber 1534. The clause is retained in NRSV, but with a note.

43 Chrysostom *In evangelium Matthaei homiliae* 21.2 (on 6:25)

44 Hilary *Commentarius in evangelium Matthaei* 5.6 (on 6:25)

45 Matthew … his own.] The entries from 26a to 26g were added in *1527*.

46 These words are found in the *1527* Vulgate but are not well attested in the Latin sources; cf Weber 1535. They are not in Erasmus' *1516* text or translation, but (no doubt by mistake) in all editions *1519* to *1535* appear in his translation in place of 'Do not judge that you be not judged,' the sentence demanded by his Greek text.

**[26b]** The same chapter 7:4. *frater, sine* ['Brother, permit me']. *Frater* ['brother'] is not in the text of either the Greek or the Old Latin manuscripts.

**[26c]** The same, chapter 7:6. *et canes conversi* ['And the dogs turn']. *Canes* ['dogs'] is not added in the Greek.

**[26d]** The same, chapter 7:21. *ipse intrabit in regnum coelorum*. ['This is the one who will enter into the kingdom of heaven']. The words are not added in the Greek manuscripts, and Jerome does not repeat them.[47]

**[26e]** The same, chapter 8:20. *ubi caput suum reclinet* ['where to lay his head']. The pronominal adjective *suum* ['his'] is not added in the Greek copies.

**[26f]** Matthew, chapter 13:22. *hic est qui verbum Dei audit*. ['This is he who hears the word of God']. *Dei* ['of God'] is redundant.

**[26g]** Matthew, chapter 18:18. *erunt soluta et in coelo* ['will be loosed also in heaven']. The Translator adds *et* ['also'] on his own.

**[27]** The First epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 3:2. *adhuc enim estis* ['For you are yet']. *Enim* ['for'] is superfluous and spoils the sense.[48]

**[28]** Matthew 9:25. *et dixit, puella surge* ['And he said, "Maiden, arise"']. These four words are not in the Greek, nor are they added by Jerome, nor do they appear in old texts.[49]

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47 This entry quotes verbatim the annotation on Matt 7:21 (*ipse intrabit in regnum coelorum*). In the Vulgate these words, found at the beginning of 7:21, are repeated at the end of the verse; cf DV. Cf Jerome *Commentarius in evangelium Matthaei* 1 (on 7:21) PL 26 49A, where the words are repeated in the introductory citation of the biblical text but not in the commentary.

48 In *1519* and *1522* this note is assigned to 1 Corinthians 5; in *1527* the reference is given as 1 Corinthians 3. LB has 1 Cor 3:5, which cannot be correct. In fact, the lemma is cited from 1 Cor 15:17. Erasmus cites as the reference for the entry 'p 352m [middle],' where the annotation on 15:17 (*adhuc enim estis*) explains why the *enim* is redundant. For so-called page numbers see 868, and for the page reference in 1522 see 868 n7.

49 Jerome *Commentarius in evangelium Matthaei* 1 (on 9:25). The entry repeats the first sentence of the annotation on the verse (*et dixit, puella surge*).

**[29]** The Second Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 2:3. *tristitiam super tristitiam* ['sorrow upon sorrow']. *Super tristitiam* has been imported into our texts from some other place, for it is not in Ambrose[50] or in the commentator Vulgarius.[51]

**[30]** The same,[52] verse 5. *me* ['me'] in our texts is superfluous.

**[31]** Matthew, chapter 10:12.[53] *dicentes, pax huic domui* ['saying, "Peace be on this house"']. These words are an addition to our texts, since they are not in the Greek or in Jerome's commentary[54] or in Theophylact.[55]

**[32]** Second Corinthians, chapter 2:16. *et ad haec quis tam idoneus* ['and for these things who is so sufficient']. *Tam* ['so'] is clearly superfluous: even Origen[56] does not add it.

**[33]** Matthew, chapter 14:19.[57] *discipuli dederunt turbis* ['The disciples gave to the multitude']. *Dederunt* ['gave'] is an addition.

**[34]** To the Galatians, chapter 3:1. *non credere veritati* ['that you do not obey the truth']. Jerome thinks this phrase is an addition, and it is not found in the oldest Latin texts.[58]

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50 Ambrosiaster *Commentarius in epistolam secundam ad Corinthios* (on 2:3)

51 Theophylact *Commentarius in epistolam secundam ad Corinthios* (on 2:3). On Vulgarius see 'Interpolations' #10 with n19.

52 The same … superfluous.] The entry was omitted in *1527*. 'Me' is superfluous in the first of a pair of clauses: 'If anyone has caused [me] pain, he has caused it not to me.'

53 Matt 10:13 in LB

54 Jerome *Commentarius in evangelium Matthaei* 1 (on 10:12)

55 The text of Theophylact in PG does, however, include the phrase; cf *Commentarius in evangelium Matthaei* (on 10:12) PG 123 237B.

56 Origen *In Genesim homiliae* 13.1 (on Gen 26:12–15) PG 12 230C. In the annotation on the verse (*tam idoneus*) Origen on Genesis was cited in a *1519* addition.

57 Matt 14:20 in LB

58 Jerome *Commentarius in epistolam ad Galatas* 1 (on 3:1). In a *1535* addition to the annotation on Gal 3:1 (*non credere veritati*) Erasmus suggests that the phrase may have been borrowed from Gal 5:7 (cf 'Interpolations' #46 with n66). It is kept, however, in his texts. Although not in Weber's text, the phrase (usually *non obedire veritati*) is widely found at this point in Latin manuscripts;

**[35]** The same, verse 1. *et in vobis crucifixus* ['and crucified among you']. *Et* ['and'] has been added and spoils the sense.[59]

**[36]** Matthew, chapter 15:8. *labiis me honorat* ['honours me with the lips']. Here something in the Greek is redundant, or else there is something omitted from the Latin.[60]

**[37]** The same, verse 9. *doctrinas et praecepta* ['doctrines and commandments']. *Et* ['and'] is redundant, since the two words are in apposition ['commandments as doctrines'].

**[38]** Chapter 16:20. *quia ipse esset Jesus Christus* ['that he himself was Jesus Christ']. 'Jesus' is redundant.

**[39]** Second Corinthians, chapter 6:13. *eandem autem retributionem habentes* ['having the same recompense']. *Habentes* ['having'] in our Latin texts is redundant.[61]

**[40]** To the Ephesians, chapter 5:18. *implemini spiritu sancto* ['Be filled with the Holy Spirit']. *Sancto* ['holy'] is superfluous.

**[41]** The same, verse 26. *in verbo vitae* ['in the word of life']. *Vitae* ['of life'] is superfluous.

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cf Weber 1804. 'Oldest Latin texts': in his annotation Eramus refers specifically to the 'oldest and very correct manuscript of St Paul's'; cf 'Interpolations' #24 with n40.

59 With *et* the passage reads, 'before whom Jesus Christ was portrayed and was crucified among you.' Without *et*: '… Christ was portrayed among you crucified' – the reading of Erasmus, but the preferred text omits as well 'among you,' reading simply, '… was portrayed crucified.'

60 Erasmus suspected textual contamination with the prophecy in Isa 29:13 to which Matthew is referring. Erasmus translated his Greek text of Matt 15:8, to which had been added 'by some zealous scribe' Isa 29:13a (LXX), 'This people draws near to me with their mouth.' The Vulgate (correctly) omits the words, citing only Isa 29:13b, '[This people] honours me with their lips'; cf the annotation on Matt 15:8 (*labiis me honorat*).

61 Cf DV 'having the same recompense … be you also enlarged'; RSV 'In return … widen your hearts also.'

**[42]** Matthew 21:37. *verebuntur forte filium meum* ['They will perchance reverence my son']. *Forte* ['perchance'] has been added by the Translator, not without some awkwardness of meaning.[62]

**[43]** Second Corinthians, chapter 11:3. *excidant* ['fall from'] has been added in our Latin texts.[63]

**[44]** Matthew 27:35. *ut impleretur quod* ['that it might be fulfilled what']. The testimony of the prophet is all an addition.[64]

**[45]** To the Galatians, chapter 5:7. *nemini consenseritis* ['Consent to no one']. This phrase is omitted by Jerome as an interpolation.[65]

**[46]**The same,[66] just before. *non credere veritati* ['that you not obey the truth'].

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62 'Perchance' suggests uncertainty on the part of the landowner-father. The narrative assumes the father's confidence; cf the paraphrase on the verse: 'They will respect my son, at least …' CWE 45 300. In his annotation on the verse (*verebuntur forte filium meum*), Erasmus suggests that the word was added by someone who wished to safeguard the divine attributes: without the qualification ('perchance'), God might be accused of either falsehood or ignorance, inasmuch as the landowner-father (God) either had said something would happen that did not happen or did not know the future.

63 Cf DV 'I fear lest … your minds should be corrupted and fall from the simplicity that is in Christ.' Erasmus wished to read, '… be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.'

64 In many (but not all) Vulgate texts (cf Weber 1572) there is not merely an allusion to Ps 22 (VG 21):18 but also an additional quotation from the 'prophet,' ie the psalmist. Although Erasmus thought the words had been added, he retained the addition in both text and translation, and the words are found in DV and AV.

65 The *1527* Vulgate reads, 'Who has hindered you that you do not obey the truth? Consent to no one.' 'Consent to no one' is not found in Weber 1807 even as a variant, and does not appear in DV. Cf the annotation on the verse (*nemini consenseritis*): 'This phrase also Jerome passes over on the grounds that it was an addition.' Cf Jerome *Commentarius in epistolam ad Galatas* 3 (on 5:7).

66 The same … *veritati*] This entry was omitted in *1527*; cf 'Interpolations' #34 with n58. These words immediately precede *nemini consenseritis* (cf previous entry); they are certainly authentic in Gal 5:7 and not an addition to the biblical text. They were apparently cited here in confusion with the same words in Gal 3:1, where they are an addition (cf 'Interpolations' #34) evidently borrowed from here.

**[47]** The same [5:8]. *persuasio haec vestra* ['this persuasion of yours']. *Haec uestra* ['this of yours'] is superfluous. *Persuasio* ['persuasion'] stands by itself.[67]

**[48]** The same, verse 13. *in occasionem detis carni* ['Make ... an occasion to the flesh']. *Detis* ['make'] is redundant.[68]

**[48a]** Mark,[69] chapter 1:10. *descendentem et manentem* ['descending and remaining']. *Et manentem* ['and remaining'] is added from elsewhere.

**[48b]** Chapter 2:24. *ecce quid faciunt discipuli tui sabbatis* ['Look, what your disciples do on the Sabbath']. *Discipuli tui* ['your disciples'] is not added in the Greek.

**[48c]** Mark, chapter 10:40. *dare vobis* ['to give to you']. 'To you' is redundant.

**[48d]** Luke, chapter 12:31. *et iustitiam eius* ['and his righteousness']. These words are not added in the evangelist.[70]

**[48e]** Chapter 19:32. *sicut dixerat eis stantem pullum* ['the colt standing as he had said to them']. *Stantem pullum* ['the colt standing'] is not added in the Greek manuscripts.[71]

**[48f]** Acts, chapter 4:8. *et seniores Israhel, audite* ['And elders of Israel, hear']. *Audite* ['hear'] is not added in the Greek.

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67 Cf the annotation on Gal 5:8 (*persuasio haec non est etc*). Although VG read *haec* 'this' (as in DV), it did not read *vestra*. In *1535* Erasmus added to his annotation a few words to note that *vestra* 'of yours' is what Augustine read!

68 The *1527* Vulgate actually read *carnis* 'of the flesh.' 'Make,' like 'use' (RSV), is apparently a translator's addition to facilitate reading; the Greek text reads, 'You are called to freedom, brothers, but not the freedom for an occasion to the flesh.'

69 Mark … copies.] Paragraphs 48a–h were added in *1527*. Cf DV 'He saw the Spirit as a dove descending and remaining on him.' In the annotation on Mark 1:10 (*descendentem et manentem*) Erasmus indicates that the words were added from John 1:32.

70 The words are found in the *1527* Vulgate and the Clementine Vulgate (cf Weber 1633), but the preferred reading of both Latin and Greek texts omits the words as an insertion from Matt 6:33.

71 Cf DV 'They found the colt standing as he had said to them'; NRSV 'They found it as he had told them.'

**[48g]** Chapter 5:15. *et liberarentur ab infirmitatibus suis* ['And they might be delivered from their infirmities' DV]. This is not in the Greek copies.

**[48h]** Chapter 7:60. *obdormivit in domino* ['He slept in the Lord']. 'In the Lord' is not added in the Greek copies.[72]

**[49]** Mark, chapter 5:41. The evangelist also made some additions of his own.[73]

**[50]** John, chapter 6:13. *duodecim cophinos, et duobus piscibus* ['twelve baskets and from the two fish']. Three words, not found even in the oldest Latin manuscripts, are added.[74]

**[51]** Mark 8:29. *tu es Christus* ['You are the Christ']. *Filius Dei vivi* ['the Son of the living God'] seems to have been added from somewhere.[75]

**[52]** Luke, chapter 4:19. *et diem retributionis* ['and the day of recompense']. These words are not in the Greek, nor are they added by Jerome.[76]

**[53]** To the Ephesians, chapter 1:7. *in remissionem peccatorum* ['for the remission of sins']. *In* ['for'] is redundant and is not in Ambrose[77] or Jerome.[78]

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72 The brief remarks in #48d–h appear to be copied directly from the annotations on the verses cited.

73 In his annotation on 5:41 (*puella tibi dico*) Erasmus comments that 'the evangelist or someone else' added the words 'I say to you,' an opinion he derived from Jerome. However, the phrase appears in his own text and translation, and remains the preferred reading of both the Greek and Latin texts.

74 The 'three words' are *et duobus piscibus* ['and from the two fish']. The preferred Latin text does in fact omit the words; cf Weber 1667 and DV 'They filled twelve baskets with the fragments from the barley loaves that remained.'

75 Cf the annotation on the verse (*tu es Christus*), where Erasmus points to Matt 16:16 as the source of the addition in Mark.

76 Luke 4:18–19 recalls Isa 61:1–2 as far as 61:2a; the Vulgate tradition included 61:2b. Jerome *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* 17 (on 61:2) PL 24 361C, citing Luke 4:19–20, omits the words.

77 Ambrosiaster *Commentarius in epistolam ad Ephesios* (on 1:7)

78 Jerome *Commentarius in epistolam ad Ephesios* 1 (on 1:7). The preferred reading omits 'for,' thus placing 'remission' in apposition to 'redemption': 'We have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.'

**[54]** Luke,[79] chapter 11:34. *lucerna corporis tui* ['the lamp of your body']. *Tui* ['your'] is an addition.

**[55]** Acts, chapter 1:4. *quam audistis, inquit* ['which you have heard, said he']. *Inquit* ['said he'] was added by the Translator.

**[56]** Luke, chapter 11:8. *si perseveraverit pulsans* ['if he shall continue knocking']. Added from another evangelist.[80]

**[57]** Chapter 17:7. *aut pascentes boves* ['or feeding cattle']. *Boves* ['cattle'] is not in the Greek.

**[58]** John, chapter 6:41. *quia dixisset* ['because he had said']. Here *vivus* ['living'] is added.[81]

**[59]** The same, chapter 7:29. *ego scio eum* ['I know him']. Several words have been added here from another place.[82]

**[60]** The same, verse 39. *nondum erat spiritus datus* ['As yet the Spirit was not given']. *Datus* ['was given'] is redundant.[83]

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79 Luke…addition] In *1519* and *1522* this entry duplicated #15, and was consequently omitted in *1527*.

80 Erasmus seems to be mistaken; the parallel passage in Matt 7:7–12 offers no grounds for his statement here. Certainly the annotation on Luke 11:8 (*si perseveraverit pulsans*) makes no reference to 'another evangelist'; cf CWE 48 7 n18. In all editions Erasmus excluded the clause from his Greek text, but in *1516* (only) he retained the clause in his translation. For the occasional disjunction between Erasmus' Greek text and his Latin translation see the comments on 'text' in *1527*, 'New Testament Scholarship' 295–6.

81 The full text in the Vulgate is '… because he had said, "I am the living [*vivus*] bread."'

82 In some Latin texts (*1527* Vulgate and others; cf Weber 1671) 'I know him' (John 7:29) is followed by words from John 8:55, to read, 'I know him, and if I shall say that I know him not, I shall be like you, a liar.'

83 Erasmus' omission (from *1516*) in his text and translation of this 'redundant' word appeared to some to weaken traditional Trinitarianism. Edward Lee attacked his annotation; cf *Responsio ad annotationes Lei 1* (Note 91) CWE 72 200–1. And as late as 1527 Erasmus reported a vicious attack on his 'name' by a preacher at 'St Paul's Cross' because of the omission; cf Ep 1858:3–389. Cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 45 with n198.

**[61]** Chapter 8:59. *et exivit de templo* ['and went out of the temple']. Some words found in Greek manuscripts are superfluous.[84]

**[62]** Chapter 12:19. *ecce totus mundus abit post eum* ['Behold, the whole world is gone after him']. *Totus* ['whole'] is certainly superfluous in our Latin texts.

**[63]** To the Romans, chapter 1:3. *qui factus est ei* ['who was made to him']. *Ei* ['to him'] has been added by the Translator.

**[64]** The same, verse 18. *veritatem Dei* ['the truth of God']. *Dei* ['of God'] is redundant.

**[65]** The same, verse 32. *qui cum iustitiam Dei* ['who although ... the justice of God']. At this point the following words have been added: *non intellexerunt* ['did not understand'].[85]

**[66]** Chapter 5:2. *in spe filiorum Dei* ['in the hope of the sons of God']. *Filiorum* ['of the sons'] in our texts is redundant, and *gloria* ['glory'] is missing.[86]

**[67]** Chapter 6:3. *an ignoratis* ['Do you not know']. *Fratres* ['brothers'] has been added.[87]

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84 John 8:59 concludes with the words '[He] went out of the temple.' AV adds the superfluous words to read, '[He] went out of the temple: going through the midst of them and so passed by.' Erasmus, in his annotation on John 8:59 (*et exivit de templo*), suggests they are an importation from Luke 4:30. The words are found in numerous witnesses but are not in the *1527* Vulgate, and Erasmus omitted them from his text and translation.

85 Cf VG '… who, although they knew the justice of God, did not understand that those who do such things …'; ER '… who although they knew the justice of God, that is, that they who do such things …'

86 Cf the annotation on Rom 5:2 ('in the hope of the sons of God'). The Vulgate read, 'in the hope of the glory of the sons of God.' Thus *gloria* is not missing from the Latin texts, and Erasmus in his annotation does not give any indication that he regarded it as missing. Possibly Erasmus, or a compiler, glanced quickly at the cue phrase of the annotation, and noticing its absence there, assumed it was missing in the Vulgate texts.

87 The *1527* Vulgate read, 'Do you not know, brothers …' 'Brothers' is not, however, commonly found as a Vulgate reading; cf Weber 1756.

**[68]** Chapter 8:15. *spiritum adoptionis* ['spirit of adoption']. Here *Dei* ['of God'] is superfluous.[88]

**[69]** Chapter 9:25. *et non misericordiam consecutam etc* ['and her that had not obtained mercy']. Jerome admits that something is superfluous.[89]

**[70]** Chapter 10:21. *et contradicentem mihi* ['and contradicting me']. *Mihi* ['me'] has been added.

**[71]** Chapter 4:18.[90] *sicut stellae caeli et harena maris* ['as the stars of the sky and the sand of the sea']. None of these words appears in the Greek codices, there is only, 'so shall your descendants be' [RSV].

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88 The *1527* Vulgate read, 'the spirit of adoption of the sons of God.' ER read, 'the spirit of adoption of sons,' which is the preferred Vulgate reading.

89 For Jerome's discussion and the 'superfluous,' ie added words, see the annotation on Rom 9:25 ('and her that has not obtained mercy, her that has obtained mercy') CWE 56 268–70 with n16, which cites Jerome *Commentarius in Osee prophetam* 1 (on 1:10).

90 This entry was added in *1527* (following #65); cf the annotation on the verse ('as the stars of the sky and the sand of the sea').

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# ERRORS MADE BY THE TRANSLATOR

*Quae per Interpretem commissa*

This brief list shows Erasmus at his strongest. Except in the final example, where he was misled by a defective manuscript tradition, all the other errors cited from the Vulgate are linguistic. Here his knowledge of precise and idiomatic usage in Greek and Latin allowed him to correct mistranslations (for example, at Luke 3:13) or to propose a more elegant version (for example, at Acts 24:14). In this respect, this list covers some of the same ground as the *Solecisms*, but here, as he explains in the opening sentence, the examples are limited to errors that can be imputed to the Translator, who, Erasmus always insists, was not Jerome. The index begins with a prefatory sentence: 'Of the errors we have noted so far, some were caused by the carelessness of scribes, others by the efforts of the half educated, many by the ignorance or carelessness of the Translator, whoever he was. The following, however, can be blamed on no one but the Translator.'

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# ERRORS MADE BY THE TRANSLATOR

**[1]** Luke, chapter 3:13. *nihil amplius, quam quod constitutum est vobis, faciatis* ['Do nothing more than that which is appointed for you']. The Greek is *πράσσετε*, but the Translator failed to realize that it should have been translated by *exigatis* ['exact'], in spite of the fact that elsewhere he translated *πράκτορες* by *exactores* ['exactors'][1] and *ἔπραξα* by *exigissem* ['had exacted'].[2]

**[2]** Luke 16:26. *in his omnibus* ['in all these'], which, I think, should have been translated 'besides all these things.'

**[3]** Acts, chapter 18:10. *et nemo apponetur tibi* ['And no man will be appointed for you'] instead of *invadet* ['attack'] or *iniiciet tibi manum* ['lay a hand on you'], for the Greek is *ἐπιθήσεταί σοι*.

**[4]** Chapter 24:14. Is it not obvious that he was dozing when he glossed a Latin word with a Greek word having the same meaning? *secundum sectam quam dicunt haeresim* ['according to the way (*secta*) which they call *haeresis*'].[3]

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1 Cf Luke 12:58, where the noun is singular, *exactor*, and Luke 19:23 *exegissem*; cf 'Solecisms' #16.

2 Luke 19:23. *Facere* 'to do' is a common literal translation of the Greek word, but the context here requires rather the sense suggested by 'to exact.'

3 The Greek text means 'according to the way, which they call *haeresis*' (*haeresis* here having the meaning 'sect'). The Vulgate version is probably intended to have the same meaning as the Greek, but this requires us to allow the Latin word *secta* to mean 'path' and to give to *haeresis* the unfamiliar meaning 'sect.' This, however, is not the meaning of *secta* in classical Latin. The sense 'path,' which was sometimes given to the word, was based on a false etymology, as though the word were derived from *seco* ('cut') and could therefore mean 'a cutting,' 'a well-trodden path.' Erasmus claims that the word would naturally mean 'sect,' which is also a possible meaning of the Greek *haeresis*. So the Translator is glossing an unfamiliar use of a Latin word (*secta*) with an unfamiliar use of a Greek word, which risks the possibility that readers will wrongly interpret it here as meaning 'heresy.'

**[5]** The First Epistle to Timothy, chapter 4:6. *παρηκολούθηκας* is translated as *assecutus* ['pursued'] instead of *assectatus* ['adhered to']. He does the same in the preface to Luke's Gospel.[4]

**[6]** The First Epistle to Timothy, chapter 1:2. He translates *γνησίῳ* ['true-born son'] as *dilecto* ['beloved'] instead of *germano*[5] ['true brother'].

**[6a]** Luke[6] 4: 38. *magnis febribus* ['great fevers'] in place of *febre magna* ['a great fever']

**[6b]** Acts 3:7. *consolidatae sunt bases* ['the foundations are strengthened']. *Bases* ['foundations'] for *pedes* ['feet'][7]

**[7]** The First Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 16:8. *ἕως τῆς πεντηκοστῆς* means *usque ad quinquagesimum* (with *diem* ['day'] understood) ['to the fiftieth day']. The Translator wrote *usque ad pentecosten* ['to Pentecost'].[8]

**[8]** The same, verse 12. *de Apollo*[9] *autem fratre* ['and concerning our brother Apollos']. The Translator has added on his own, 'I give you to understand,' to make the language smoother.[10]

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4 Luke 1:3, on which see the annotation (*assecuto omnia*). On the word here in question Erasmus had in 1516 engaged in a lively conversation with Guillaume Budé, a conversation in which the meaning of the Greek word and its proper Latin equivalent were discussed in detail; cf Epp 403:89–120 and 441:2–16; also 'New Testament Scholarship' 207 with n802. Cf 'Passages Manifestly Corrupt' #69 n51.

5 Neither Latin word is the exact equivalent of the Greek. But Erasmus prefers *germano*, since, like the Greek, it carries the notion of legitimacy. Timothy is a *true* brother / son of Paul.

6 Luke … *pedes*] These two items were added in *1527*.

7 The narrative in Acts describes the healing of a cripple, whose 'feet are strengthened.' The Vulgate takes over the word used here in the Greek for 'feet' (*basis*), which in Latin is largely confined to a number of technical senses, eg 'pedestal.'

8 The literal meaning of 'Pentecost' is 'fiftieth.' In his annotation on the passage (*usque ad pentecosten*) Erasmus suggests that it should be translated literally here, since the gentile Christians of Corinth would have been puzzled by a reference to Pentecost.

9 Apollo] In *1519* and *1522*; in *1527*, 'Appollo'

10 Cf DV 'And touching our brother Apollos, I give you to understand that I have much entreated him …' The additional phrase was not the invention of the Translator but is found in some Greek manuscripts of the Western tradition.

# WHERE THE TRANSLATOR PRESUMED TO MAKE A CHANGE IN THE WORDS OF THE APOSTLES OR THE EVANGELISTS

*Ubi interpres ausus sit aliquid immutare*
*de verbis apostolorum aut evangelistarum*

The final piece in this series of 'indexes' is brief and somewhat carelessly organized. Some of the items simply note the addition of a word; they could have been included equally well in 'Interpolations.' Most of Erasmus' criticisms under the present heading will strike the reader as excessively pedantic. On the face of it, there does not seem much reason to complain that the Translator wrote *beatam dicent* instead of *beabunt* at Luke 1:48, roughly the difference between saying, 'All generations shall *call me blessed*' (AV) and 'All generations will *count me blessed*' (NEB); and in fact, Erasmus keeps the Vulgate wording in his own translation of this verse. Again in Romans 10:8 he appears to criticize the Vulgate for writing, 'Scripture says,' where Paul had said simply, 'It says.' But in his annotation on this verse he agrees that the addition of 'Scripture' here is 'quite appropriate' and is an aid to clarity. Apart from the confusion in the text of Romans 10:7, there is only one example (1 Corinthians 11:24) where the reading favoured by the Translator makes a difference, and that has already been noted under 'Passages Manifestly Corrupt.' What was the point, then, in putting together such an unimpressive list? We can make sense of it only if we see it as part of the debate about the proper way to translate Scripture, a debate that goes back at least as far as Jerome. Erasmus here is not so much criticizing the Vulgate as defending his own practice. He is demonstrating how the Vulgate is not in the strictest sense a literal, word-for-word translation. By pointing to the practice of the Translator, he hopes to neutralize any criticism levelled against him for excessive freedom in translation. For Erasmus' views on translation see the letter to Johann von Botzheim preparatory to the *Responsio ad Collationes* (Ep 2206).[1]

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1 See also 'New Testament Scholarship,' especially for the first three editions, 47–8, 124–5 with nn534, 535, and 201–3.

# WHERE THE TRANSLATOR PRESUMED TO MAKE A CHANGE IN THE WORDS OF THE APOSTLES OR THE EVANGELISTS

**[1]** Matthew, chapter 16:22. Although the Greek is *ἱλέως σοι, κύριε*, that is, *propitius tibi, domine* ['Be kind to you / yourself, O Lord'], the Translator did not hesitate to translate it as *absit a te, domine* ['Far be it from you, O Lord'].[1] Similarly, he invariably translates the phrase *μὴ γένοιτο* (that is, 'Let it not happen') by *absit* ['far be it from ...'], conveying the sense but changing the wording.

**[2]** Luke, chapter 1:48. For *μακαριοῦσι*, that is, *beabunt* ['They will bless'], he did not hesitate to write *beatam dicent* ['They will call blessed'], conveying the sense through a periphrasis.

**[3]** Acts, chapter 1:4. *quam audistis, inquit* ['which, he said, you have heard']. The Translator has added the word *inquit* ['He said'] on his own.[2]

**[4]** To the Romans, chapter 8:21. *qui subiecit eam* ['who made it subject']. He has added *eam* ['it'] for the sake of clarity.

**[5]** Chapter 10:7. *καταγαγεῖν*, that is, *deducere* ['to bring down'], which the Translator renders by *revocare* ['to recall'].[3]

**[6]** The same, verse 8. On his own authority he has added *scriptura* ['Scripture'] to make the meaning more transparent.

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1 Erasmus, in his annotation on the passage (*absit a te, domine*), suggests that the unexpressed subject of this idiomatic expression may be 'God' ('May God be kind to you'). However, he recognizes that the general force of the idiom is apotropaic ('God forbid!' 'Perish the thought!'). The Vulgate text, therefore, seems an adequate rendering of the Greek.

2 This entry duplicates 'Interpolations' #55.

3 There is confusion here between the verbs in Rom 10:6 'bring down' and 10:7 'bring up' ie 'recall': 'ascend … to bring Christ down' (10:6), 'descend … to bring Christ up [ie recall]' (10:7). The Vulgate correctly translated *καταγαγεῖν* 'bring down' (10:6) by *deducere* (not, as stated here, by *revocare*) and *ἀναγαγεῖν* 'bring up, ie recall' (10:7) by *revocare*. Cf the annotation on 10:6 ('to bring down'), where the same error appears and was not corrected until *1535*. All three editions of this entry have the error.

**[7]** The First Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 10:4. *consequente eos petra* ['the rock following them']. The Translator has added *eos* ['them'] on his own.

**[8]** Chapter 11:24. *τὸ κλώμενον*, that is, *quod frangitur* ['which is broken']. He has rendered this by *tradetur* ['will be delivered'] because the other verb sounded too strong, since it was written of Christ, *os non comminuetis ex eo* ['You shall not break a bone of his'].[4]

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4 Exod 12:46; Num 9:12; John 19:36. The reading *tradetur* is unlikely to be an invention of the Translator of the Vulgate since it has some authority in Greek texts. The correct reading of this important passage is much debated. Cf 'Passages Manifestly Corrupt' #51 n37.

# THE TRAVELS OF THE APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL, WITH A CHRONOLOGY BY DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM

*Peregrinatio apostolorum Petri et Pauli cum ratione temporum per Desiderium Erasmum Roterodamum*

introduced, translated, and annotated by

ROBERT D. SIDER

As one of the many embellishments intended apparently to enhance the second edition of the New Testament (*1519*), Erasmus had prefaced the text of Acts with a Greek account of 'The Travels of the Apostle Paul' (*Apodemia Paulou tou apostolou*). This was an extremely bare account, little more than a half-page enumeration of names of cities, regions, and islands found in the biblical record of Paul's journeys, and it was concluded by an equally bare chronology. It appeared again in the same form in the next edition (1522), but Erasmus seems to have been aware of its limitations, at least for a popular audience. When, therefore, he prepared his *Paraphrase on Acts* (1524), he composed a preface in Latin, *Peregrinatio apostolorum Petri et Pauli*,[1] that was comparable to the Greek travelogue, but which, in fact, transformed it into a genuinely humanist document, attractive for a popular audience. As noted above, the new preface reflected the application of historical methodology: Erasmus 'constructed the historical record from an analysis of available texts, evaluated nonbiblical sources, worked through historical problems, and provided perspective.'[2] This transformation of a traditional document resembles the earlier transformation of the Arguments, beginning notably with the *Paraphrase on Romans* (1517), which had replaced the slender traditional Argument prefacing the Epistle in the first edition (*1516*) with an elaborate introduction to the Epistle that illuminated its background, central themes, and literary characteristics, a composition that was published first in the *Paraphrase* and thereafter in both *Paraphrase* and the editions of the New Testament.

Unlike the Arguments, however, the *Peregrinatio apostolorum* appeared again not in the subsequent editions of the *Paraphrase on Acts* (1534 and 1535) but only in the editions of the New Testament (*1527* and *1535*), following immediately the Greek *Apodemia*, which Erasmus retained. The place of the *Peregrinatio apostolorum* in Erasmus' New Testament may have significance beyond its value as an introduction to the book of Acts. Erasmus had seen the Acts as a continuation of the narrative of the Gospels, and indeed in the later collected editions of the *Paraphrases*, the *Paraphrase on Acts* was included with the *Paraphrases* on the Gospels. In the 1519 and 1522 editions of the New Testament, the Greek *Apodemia* as a preface to Acts paralleled the prefaces to the individual Gospels, each preface consisting of a brief Greek account of the Gospel with no Latin equivalent. But in the 1527 edition, where the Greek *Apodemia* was accompanied by the Latin *Peregrinatio apostolorum*, the text of

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1 I refer to the work by the short form *Peregrinatio apostolorum* throughout. In the Latin title *Desiderius* was added in *1535*.

2 'New Testament Scholarship' 252 with n1034

Acts was now prefaced in the same manner as the Epistles (the Greek, that is, the 'hypothesis,' followed by the Latin, that is, the Argument), suggesting that a closer tie between Acts and the Epistles was intended. The tie was strengthened by the explicit allusions in the *Peregrinatio apostolorum* to the Epistles – Philippians, Thessalonians, Romans, Titus, and Timothy – so that the narrative of Acts might seem to look to the Epistles. At the same time, as suggested above, Erasmus' *Peregrinatio apostolorum* would undoubtedly stand out for the perceptive reader, particularly in so far as it contrasted with the Greek *Apodemia*, as representative of a historical approach to Scripture: these biblical books that witness to the development of early Christianity were to be seen as a joint endeavour, the Holy Spirit directing the writer who, however, as the human agent writing the text, conspicuously ordered the events within the frame of normal historical time and space.

RDS

# THE TRAVELS OF THE APOSTLES PETER AND PAUL, WITH A CHRONOLOGY BY DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM

From the Acts of the Apostles it is not evident that Peter frequently moved from place to place. He did, however, after the death of Stephen, set out, along with his colleague John, for the city of Samaria, to which later the name 'Sebaste' was given; from the city the whole region received the name 'Samaria.'[1] He went to Samaria to confirm with his authority and to complete what Philip the deacon had begun there.[2] Thereafter, he seems to have travelled through many parts of Samaria, for so we read in chapter eight: 'And they were preaching the gospel to many of the districts of Samaria' [8:25]. Moreover, the ninth chapter affirms that he travelled through various regions of Palestine before he came to Lydda and Joppa; for it says, 'And it came to pass that Peter, as he passed through visiting all,[3] came to the saints who dwelt at Lydda' [9:32 DV]. Lydda is in Palestine, not far from Joppa, a coastal city. We read that, again setting out from Joppa, he came to Caesarea, a Palestinian city on the sea that had formerly been called the 'Tower of Strato.'[4] Here he baptized Cornelius the centurion and from here returned to Jerusalem.[5]

I shall not, however, trouble to investigate when he set out for Antioch (where he is believed to have presided), or when he took himself to Rome and through what regions he travelled, for this has come down to us only in accounts from human sources. For Eusebius, who thinks that he preached the gospel to the peoples of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia, made his conjecture purely from the fact that Peter mentions these peoples in

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1 Cf CWE 50 57 n18.
2 For Philip see Acts 6:5; and for his successful mission to Samaria and its confirmation by Peter and John, Acts 8:5–25.
3 The reference in the Greek text is ambiguous: either 'all people' or 'all quarters.' Erasmus defended the reading 'all people'; cf the annotation on Acts 9:32 (*dum transiret universos*).
4 For the biblical reference see Acts 10:23–4; for the 'Tower of Strato' see CWE 50 69 n2.
5 Cf Acts 10:48 (baptism of Cornelius), 11:2 (return to Jerusalem).

his First Epistle.[6] It was appropriate, however, that the chief apostles should reside for some years in that city from which the Lord Jesus had wanted the evangelical doctrine to be spread first into all the regions of Judaea, then through the whole world.[7]

Now the claim is made in what is called the *Ecclesiastical History* that Christ handed the primatial care of the church over to Peter, James, and John.[8] This is deduced from the fact that sometimes these are specifically mentioned, while nothing is told about the others – what they did or said – except that they stood by as witnesses when Peter was speaking.[9] There were, however, two Jameses, one the son of Zebedee and brother of John. Herod killed him, and this itself shows that he was pre-eminent among the apostles.[10] The other was the son of Alphaeus. A third James is frequently mentioned in the Acts.[11] This James was called the brother of the Lord; his surname was Justus, the son (as Jerome supposes) of the Mary who was the sister of the Lord's mother.[12] To this James is attributed the Epistle that we read among the Catholic Epistles. Although he was not one of the twelve

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6 Both Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History* 3.36.2) and Jerome (*De viris illustribus* 1.1) report that Peter was bishop of Antioch; Eusebius adds that he was succeeded by Ignatius. Both also indicate that Peter travelled to Rome through those territories mentioned in 1 Pet 1:1 – Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia – preaching to the Jews of the Dispersion; cf Jerome *De viribus illustribus* 1.1; Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 3.4.2.

7 The city is Jerusalem; cf Acts 1:4 and 8.

8 Cf Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 2.1–3, where Eusebius quotes from the lost *Hypotyposeis* of Clement of Alexandria: Peter, James, and John, though given the preferred place by Christ, chose James the Just as bishop of Jerusalem. The subsequent citation (2.1.4–5) adds that the 'gnosis,' ie the divine doctrine, was committed to James the Just, Peter, and John. In spite of Eusebius, Erasmus here seems to refer to James the apostle, not James the Just. Cf also Gal 2:9; and the allusion to it in CWE 50 96 n21.

9 Peter is ubiquitous in Acts 1–15; for Peter and John see Acts 3–4 and Acts 8:14–25; for Peter, John, and James the apostle, Acts 12:1–3; for James the Just, Acts 15:13–21; for the eleven who stood by Peter as witnesses, Acts 2:14. The deduction reflects the inference of Erasmus, not an explicit statement of Eusebius.

10 Cf Acts 12:2.

11 James, bishop of Jerusalem, is evidently mentioned in Acts only at 12:17, 15:13, and 21:18.

12 For the familial connections of James the Just see Jerome *De viris illustribus* 2.1; CWE 50 82 n28. Eusebius, citing Hegesippus (cf n15 below), explains the appellation 'Just' in *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.1–20. Erasmus identifies James as the 'Just' in his paraphrases on Acts 21:18 and on Gal 1:19, adding in the latter the traditional explanation of the surname; cf CWE 50 127 and 42 101.

apostles, nevertheless, immediately after the death of Christ the apostles appointed him bishop of Jerusalem.[13] After Paul had appealed to Caesar,[14] James was thrown from the pinnacle of the temple, and, while some were stoning him, he was beaten with a fuller's club and died.[15] Jerome, both[16] elsewhere and in his exposition of the seventeenth chapter of Isaiah, says that this James was not one of the apostles, and yet the great extent of his authority is evident from the very fact that in the debate in council whether the burden of the Mosaic law should be imposed on the gentiles, it was James who, following Peter, authoritatively delivered the verdict, saying, *ἐγὼ κρίνω*.[17] Later, James also counselled Paul to join four men who had placed themselves under a vow and to be purified with them in the temple according to Jewish ritual. Paul followed James' advice. And indeed, when Paul entered the city, he greeted James first, as though he held the primacy there.[18] And in the Epistle to the Galatians, he names James a pre-eminent apostle; he says, 'But of the other apostles I saw no one, except James the brother of the Lord' [1:19]. But that Peter was at Antioch Paul makes clear in the same Epistle, telling how he rebuked him for his pretences.[19]

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13 For authorship and episcopate see the Argument to the Epistle of James CWE 44 135 and the annotation on James 1:1 (*Iacobus apostolus*), where Erasmus generally follows Jerome *De viris illustribus* 2.1–2 and Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.3–25, 3.5.2, and 3.7.8. Cf also a final note following the annotation on James 5:20 (*et operit*).

14 Cf Acts 25:11.

15 Jerome (*De viris illustribus* 2.7–8) and Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History* 2.23.3–25, citing Hegesippus) both describe James' death and implicitly date it after the death of Festus, before whom Paul appealed to Caesar. Eusebius quotes extensively from the *Memoirs* of Hegesippus (second-century church historian; cf ODCC 750).

16 both … Isaiah] Added in *1535*; cf Jerome *Commentarius in Isaiam prophetam* 5 (on Isa 17:5–6), where Jerome distinguishes the twelve elected apostles, to which were added Paul, 'the vessel of election,' and 'James, who is called the brother of the Lord.' Cf also Jerome *Commentarius in epistolam ad Galatas* 1 (on Gal 1:19).

17 Erasmus leaves the Greek untranslated, but cf his annotation on Acts 15:19 (*ego iudico*), where he prefers *ego censeo* to VG *ego iudico* 'I judge.' *Censeo* was used in classical Latin of senate transactions in the sense of 'recommend'; cf *Oxford Latin Dictionary* ed P.G.W. Glare (Oxford 1982) 297 sv *censeo* 5: 'strictly advisory but *de facto* binding.' This classical sense seems to be Erasmus' understanding of the Greek; cf the translations: 'I judge' (DV), 'My sentence is' (AV), 'I have reached the decision' (NRSV), 'My judgment is' (NEB).

18 For the vow see Acts 21:17–26. It is not, however, James alone who counsels Paul, but James and the elders; cf Acts 21:20–3.

19 Cf Gal 2:11–14.

Now in Eusebius, Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, a very ancient writer, reveals in his letters that Peter and Paul by order of Nero won the crown of martyrdom on the same day.[20] But that Peter held first place among the preeminent apostles is shown by the fact that in all the Gospel writers, and also in Acts, he is always mentioned first in the enumeration of the twelve.[21] It is further shown by the fact that initially he was generally the first to speak. For even before the Holy Spirit had been sent, when the disciples were gathered together in the upper room, he put forward a proposal about choosing someone in the place of Judas.[22] Again, when there was an uproar among the people because of the miracle of tongues, Peter alone began the evangelical preaching.[23] He was the first of all to perform a miracle in the name of Jesus when he healed the lame man in front of the gates of the temple. Soon, as a result, a crowd rushed together in Solomon's portico, and Peter preached to the people.[24] John also, as Peter's companion, seems to have said something that is not reported, for Luke says, 'And as they were still speaking to the people' [Acts 4:1] – unless you are satisfied to understand that both spoke the words, in the sense that Peter spoke in the name of both.[25] A similar passage soon follows in the same third chapter: 'But Peter and John answering said to them' [4:19].[26] Again, in the fourth chapter: 'But Peter answering and the

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20 Cf Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 2.25.8. For Dionysius of Corinth (fl 170) see Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 4.23.1–13; Jerome *De viribus illustribus* 27.

21 Cf Matt 10:2–4; Mark 3:16–19; Luke 6:14–16; Acts 1:13. Cf, however, the annotation on Matt 10:2 (*primus Simon*): 'St Jerome notes that the other evangelists do not list the apostles in the same order as Matthew, so that no one should make Peter first of them all just because he is placed first here.'

22 Cf Acts 1:15–22; and the paraphrase on 1:15, where Peter 'assumes the role of bishop' CWE 50 10.

23 Cf Acts 2:14; and the paraphrase on the verse: 'Here … recognize Peter's rank and authority. He is the first to speak when circumstances require an evangelical orator' CWE 50 17.

24 Cf Acts 3:1–12; and the paraphrase on 3:6, where Peter speaks with a 'sublime voice truly worthy of the Supreme Vicar of Christ' CWE 50 27. On the primacy of Peter see *Ratio* 605 with n613.

25 The *Gloss* allowed for both possibilities, ie that Peter spoke and that both spoke; cf CWE 50 30 n1. Erasmus' paraphrase on Acts 4:1 is somewhat ambiguous, but a certain primacy is given to Peter, for Peter is 'the divine orator,' John is his 'colleague' CWE 50 30.

26 A reference apparently to Acts 4:19; this and the next two allusions follow consecutively from the fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters. Thus 'third' and 'fourth' are apparently mistakes for 'fourth' and 'fifth.'

apostles said' [5:29] – because Peter spoke with the voice of all.[27] Again, when there was the matter of creating deacons, Peter alone spoke.[28] He alone pronounced judgment on Ananias.[29] Moreover, the fact that Peter was the first to be thrown into prison and beaten with rods also demonstrates his pride of place among the apostles – although from the narrative of Luke it seems that all the apostles were beaten with rods along with Peter, who had now for a second time been thrown into prison.[30]

Now let us speak about Paul. Like a valiant commander, he hastened through all lands, over all seas, to bring all nations under the yoke of Christ.[31] First, he set out from Jerusalem to go to Damascus. This is a city in Coele-Syria, or[32] Syrophoenicia, the capital of all Syria, situated between Libanus and Antelibanus. The city once belonged to Arabia, according to Tertullian in

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27 The translation is literal. Erasmus has quoted Acts 5:29 precisely in the Latin of his *1516* translation (which is without internal punctuation) and of the Vulgate: *respondens autem Petrus et apostoli dixerunt*. One might interpret *respondens* 'answering' (singular) as referring to Peter alone, *dixerunt* 'they said' as including Peter and the apostles. From *1519* Erasmus placed a comma after *apostoli*, reading, 'Peter and the apostles answering, said.' The paraphrase of *1524* gives the speech entirely to Peter: '… let us hear the fisherman and evangelical pontiff replying with a dauntless intrepidity'; a small addition in *1534* includes the apostles but gives the primacy to Peter: '… let us hear the fisherman and evangelical pontiff replying in the name of all the apostles with a dauntless intrepidity …' Cf CWE 50 43 with n44.

28 In Acts 6:2 Peter is not specifically mentioned; it is the twelve who speak.

29 Cf Acts 5:1–6.

30 From Luke's narrative it appears that the first of the apostles to be 'put in custody' were Peter and John; cf Acts 4:1–3. Peter was later cast into prison with all the apostles, and upon their release all were beaten; cf Acts 5:17–21, 40. It is only in Acts 12 that Peter alone is thrown into prison; cf Acts 12:3–5.

31 For the image of Paul as warrior, military leader, and commander conquering the world for Christ see the paraphrases on Acts 9:15–16, 19, and 24 CWE 50 65–7, where Paul is described as *propugnator* 'champion,' *eximius bellator* 'distinguished warrior,' and, as here, *strenuus dux* 'valiant commander.' Cf also the paraphrases on Acts 16:3 and 17:10 CWE 50 101 and 106, and the letter to Erard de la Marck, dedicatory to the *Paraphrase on the Two Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians*, Ep 916:217–46.

32 Coele-Syria, or] Added in *1527*. Ancient authors describe variously the boundaries of Coele-Syria (cf Strabo *Geographia* 16.2.2, 16, 21), but under Septimius Severus (c AD 200) it became the name of a province in northern Syria (*New Pauly* 3 505); cf n33 immediately below. On the term 'Syrophoenicia' see the annotation on Mark 7:25 (*ad pedes eius*).

*Against Marcion* 3.[33] Here Paul was baptized and began his preaching of the gospel. He fled in secret from Damascus,[34] but from Acts it is not sufficiently clear whether he went to Arabia, then returned to Damascus, and after three years returned to Jerusalem to see Peter, as he himself reports in the Epistle to the Galatians, or whether directly to Jerusalem.[35] Indeed, it is not even clear whether it was during his first preaching ministry or a second that he came into danger by the trap set up by the governor.[36] From Luke's account it seems that he withdrew at once to Jerusalem when he had fled from Damascus, for the disciples did not want to take into their fellowship one who had a little

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33 Cf Tertullian *Adversus Marcionem* 3.13.8. Ernest Evans in his edition of the *Adversus Marcionem* (Oxford 1970) I 209 notes that 'Damascus was reckoned to Arabia until it was brought into Coele-Syria, on the division of Syria by Septimius Severus between 193 and 198 (Dio Cassius 53.12).' Erasmus defines the location of Damascus in similar terms in the *Paraphrase on Luke*; cf CWE 48 255 with n90. The position of Damascus between the Libanus and the Antilibanus mountains can be clearly seen in the maps that accompanied editions of Ptolemy's *Geographia* published by Jacobus Pentius de Leucho (Venice 1511) and by Johann Schott (Strasbourg 1513), for which see CWE 50, the frontispiece and xx–xxi. For Damascus as the capital of 'all Syria' see CWE 50 63 n2. For Antioch as the capital of the Roman province of Syria in the New Testament period see n42 below and CWE 50 94 n3.

34 Cf 2 Cor 11:32–3; Acts 9:23–4.

35 Erasmus compares the accounts of Paul's activities as given in the narratives of Acts 9:23–6 and Gal 1:16–19, and on the grounds of historical probability, discounts the likelihood of a three-year intervening period implied in Paul's own narrative in Galatians. The paraphrase on Acts 9:24–5 suggests Paul's immediate return to Jerusalem CWE 50 67; the paraphrase on Gal 1:17–18 accepts the three-year intervening period (CWE 42 101), following Jerome in his commentary on the Epistle. Jerome had posited the possibility that Paul, facing persecution in Damascus, fled to Jerusalem, 'as to any other city,' then immediately returned to Arabia or Damascus where he carried out a three-year mission before returning to Jerusalem, on which occasion he visited Peter; cf Jerome *Commentarius in epistolam ad Galatas* 1 (on Gal 1:17). The annotation on Gal 1:16 (*non acquievi*) ASD VI-9 64:168–78 records the exegetical ground on which Jerome established the view he gives in his commentary on Gal 1:17.

36 For the 'trap' see 2 Cor 11:32 and Acts 9:24. Bede also questions whether the trap was laid during a first or second visit to Damascus; *Super Acta apostolorum expositio* (on Acts 9:26) PL 92 964D. For the supposed second visit see n35 immediately above. For Paul's preaching ministry see Acts 9:20; and the paraphrases on Acts 9:20 and 9:23 CWE 50 66; also the paraphrase on Gal 1:17 CWE 42 101. Erasmus here evidently assumes a second period of preaching when Paul returned to Damascus from Arabia.

before set out with hostile intent against the disciples.[37] But if he had been preaching for so many years, it would have been almost impossible that they would not have known from report that he had been transformed.

Once more a fugitive, he was conducted from Jerusalem to Caesarea Philippi, a town[38] Ptolemy calls 'Paneae,' Eusebius 'Paneas'; it is a town at the foot of Mount Libanus, where are the sources of the Jordan.[39] From this Caesarea he was sent to Tarsus. This is Paul's native city and the capital of Cilicia; the river Cydnus flows through it.[40] He was brought back to Antioch by Barnabas; Antioch is the capital of Phoenicia, whence also the region closest to Cilicia gets its name; it[41] is situated on the Orontes river.[42] From here he set out for Jerusalem once more to deliver the money collected in aid of

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37 Cf Acts 9:26.

38 a town … 'Paneas'] Added in *1527*

39 Cf Acts 9:29–30. In his annotation on Matt 16:13 (*Caesareae Philippi*) Erasmus explains the name: the city was built by Philip, son of Herod the Great, in honour of the emperor Tiberius Caesar; the name was later changed to Paneas. He adds that the city was situated at the foot of the Libanus mountains, where the two sources of the Jordan are found. For Ptolemy see the *Geographia* 5.14/15, where Caesarea Paneae is listed (under Syria and the fourth map) among the inland towns of Phoenicia. Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History* 7.17) says that the Phoenicians call Caesarea Philippi 'Paneas.' The city, originally called Panion, and later Paneas, was enlarged by Philip the Tetrarch, son of Herod the Great, and named Caesarea in honour of Augustus. It came to be called Caesarea Philippi 'in the first century to distinguish it from the other cities named Caesarea … In later Roman and Byzantine times, the name Caesarea Philippi was superseded by the old name Paneas …' (John Kutsko in ABD I 803). As in the paraphrase on the verse (CWE 50 67), Erasmus here identifies the city mentioned in Acts 9:30 as Caesarea Philippi, rather than the port city Caesarea, thus assuming that Paul made the journey to Cilicia by land; cf CWE 50 67 n38.

40 For Paul as a native of Tarsus see Acts 9:11, 21:39, and 22:3. In 66 BC Tarsus became the capital of the Roman province of Cilicia, which had been newly created after Pompey had cleared the eastern Mediterranean of pirates.

41 it … river] Added in *1527*

42 Cf Acts 11:25–6, where in the narrative Barnabas brings Saul to Antioch from Tarsus. Antioch was in fact the capital of the Roman province of Syria (cf 956–7 n33 above); 'Phoenicia' may be a mistake, since Erasmus elsewhere recognizes that 'Antioch' separates Cilicia from Phoenicia. For the boundaries of Phoenicia see Strabo *Geographia* 16.2.22. In Pliny (Elder) *Naturalis historia* 5.12.13 the name Antioch refers to the region next to Cilicia. Cf the paraphrases on Acts 11:19 and 25, where 'Antioch' is evidently a region that 'separates Phoenicia from

the poor.[43] When the mission was completed, he returned to Antioch, from where he had come.

When the name of apostle had here been bestowed upon him, he set out for Seleucia.[44] This is on the promontory of Antioch of Syria, directly on the route of anyone wishing to set out for Cyprus from the city of Antioch.[45] From Seleucia he set sail for Cyprus, an island opposite Cilicia in Asia Minor. He landed at Salamis, the easternmost city of Cyprus, and came to Paphos, the westernmost city; thus we may infer that he traversed the whole island. Some think that here his name was changed from Saul to Paul, taken from Sergius Paulus, proconsul of this island. It is more fitting, however, that parents and patrons bestow their own name upon their children and freedmen than that they borrow a name from them.[46] Sailing from Paphos, he landed at Perge, a city of Pamphylia.[47] Hence to Antioch of Pisidia, then to Iconium,

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Cilicia' and that 'borders on Cilicia' CWE 50 78, 79. Erasmus locates 'Antioch' similarly in Ep 1381:68–70. For Phoenicia and Antioch see CWE 50 63 n2 and 94 n3, respectively.

43 Cf Acts 11:27–30.

44 In Acts 14:4 and 14 Paul is designated 'apostle' along with Barnabus during their first missionary journey. Erasmus evidently interprets the commissioning of Paul and Barnabas narrated in Acts 13:1–3 as the point at which Paul received the name of apostle. In the annotation on Rom 1:1 ('called an apostle') Erasmus defines apostle as 'one sent by another'; cf Acts 13:3, where Barnabas and Saul are 'sent off' by the church of Antioch. Cf also Ep 1381:72–3: it was at Antioch 'that Paul and Barnabas first assumed the honour of their apostolic office.' For Seleucia see CWE 50 84 n13.

45 In this sentence Erasmus apparently distinguishes the region of Antioch from the city; cf n42 above.

46 For the double name see Acts 13:9; CWE 50 85 n25. Here in the *Peregrinatio* Erasmus places Sergius Paulus in the position of 'child' or 'freedman' of Paul; some, adopting this view, had inferred – but incorrectly – that the apostolic name 'Paul' was derived from that of the proconsul. In his annotation on Rom 1:1 ('Paul') CWE 56 3 Erasmus discusses the double name and concludes that Saul was the apostle's name given at birth, but the name 'Saul' could, by a very slight change, become 'Paul' and so was adopted by the apostle as an accommodation to the Greco-Roman world he was attempting to evangelize.

47 'Landed at Perge': *appulit Pergen*. In Acts 13:13 ER (translation and paraphrase) and VG read *venit* 'came'; but *appulit* here suggests that Paul went to Perge all the way by boat, and Erasmus confirms this view a few sentences below: 'They returned to Perge … where they had first landed from Cyprus.' Strabo (*Geographia* 14.3.10–14.4.2) locates the city 'sixty stades' up the Cestrus River.

presently to Lystra, a city of Lycaonia. Here Paul was stoned.[48] From Lystra he set out for Derbe, which is itself also a city of Lycaonia. Then retracing his steps, he returned through Lystra, Iconium and Antioch of Pisidia to confirm what had been begun.[49] And travelling likewise through the rest of Pisidia, they returned to Pamphylia, all the way to Perge, where they had first landed from Cyprus, then to Attalia, a coastal city of Pamphylia. Scribes had turned the name into 'Italia.'[50] Weighing anchor at Attalia, they sailed to Antioch of Syria, the point from which he had first begun his journey.[51]

From Antioch, Paul once again made the journey to Jerusalem to commend to[52] the other apostles what he had done in Asia Minor. On the way, he preached the gospel in Phoenicia and Samaria, through which his journey led him. This completed, he returned to Antioch, from where he had come.

Having been separated from Barnabas at Antioch,[53] Paul travelled through Syria, and thereafter Cilicia. Then, he again visited Derbe and Lystra, where he circumcised Timothy. From Lystra he made his way through Phrygia and Galatia, then came to Mysia, soon to Troas. Here a problem arises. For

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However, as the Cestrus was not navigable by larger boats, it is probable that Paul in fact landed at Attalia; cf Acts 14:25; Haenchen 407. But cf also *New Pauly* 10 774, where it is said simply that the river was navigable for sixty stades.

48 The details of the 'first missionary journey' are found in Acts 13–14; for the stoning see Acts 14:19.

49 The account here follows closely the narrative of Acts 14:19–26, the language echoing at points Erasmus' translation.

50 For this brief comment on the text of Acts 14:25, unexpectedly inserted in the narrative here, see the annotation on the verse (*descenderunt in Italiam*), where Erasmus observes that the Greek is 'Attalia.' The reading *Italia* is rare: it is not cited in Weber 1223 and is not found in the Vulgate printed in Erasmus' *1527* New Testament.

51 The subject becomes once again Paul alone, after several clauses in which Erasmus has, perhaps inadvertently, included Barnabas in the action, as in the biblical account.

52 'To commend to': *probaret*. Cf the paraphrase on Acts 15:3: 'They [Paul and Barnabas] were not proceeding to Jerusalem to learn from apostles whether they had thus far acted rightly or not, but to calm the disquietude of the weak with the authority of more eminent persons' CWE 50 95–6. For the journey 'made once again' (a reference to Acts 11:25–30; cf n43) to Jerusalem and the return to Antioch see Acts 15:1–4, 22–35. In this 'travelogue' Erasmus entirely omits the central feature of the visit – the Council of Jerusalem. 'Preached the gospel': the paraphrase mirrors the biblical text more closely: 'They told how the gentiles had turned to God' CWE 50 95.

53 Cf Acts 15:37–40. For the ensuing details of the journey as far as Troas see Acts 16:1–10.

if Luke is referring to the Phrygia in which Troas is situated, then for one travelling from Lycaonia, Galatia comes before Phrygia. Yet in chapter sixteen Luke reports: 'And when they had passed through Phrygia and the country of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia' [Acts 16:6]. There seems to be no question[54] whether here Asia is taken for that part of Asia Minor simply called Asia, or concerns the whole of Asia Minor where Paul had already preached in many places. For Galatia, as it lies to the north, that is, towards the Euxine Sea, has Cappadocia on the east, Bithynia on the west, Pisidia and Lycaonia on the south.[55] Moreover, Greater Mysia is closest to Asia properly so called; Lesser Mysia is above Phrygia. The difficulty can be explained in this way: that in these two words, 'Phrygia' and 'Galatia,' the order is reversed (you[56] will find the correct order in the eighteenth chapter, in the description of the same route);[57] that we understand that Paul went directly from Lycaonia to Galatia, then to Phrygia, while from Phrygia he had wanted to make for Bithynia through Mysia,[58] had not the Spirit forbidden him. This part of Asia adjoins Phrygia on the east and south.[59] We would also understand that Paul, forbidden to go there, turned his course to Mysia,[60] if I am not mistaken, through which goes the road to Bithynia (once called Bebrycia and Mygdonia),[61] on the north and

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54 There seems to be no question] First in *1527*; in *1524*, 'Again it is uncertain'

55 on the south.] In *1524* only, an additional clause followed here: 'though Ptolemy has another Phrygia situated to the west.' Ptolemy identifies 'Phrygia Minor or Troas' and 'Phrygia Pisidia' *Geographia* 5.2 and 5.5; for the former see 967 n93 below. For the geography Erasmus discusses here see CWE 50 as follows: for Troas and Phrygia in the Troad, 102 n19; for the distinction between Asia and Asia Minor, 16 n34, 86 n31, 102 n16; for the relative position of Phrygia to Galatia and the other regions mentioned in this paragraph, 101 n13 and 102 n16; for maps, xxii–xxv.

56 you … route] Added in *1527*

57 Cf Acts 18:23; CWE 50 101 n13.

58 for Bithynia through Mysia] First in *1527*; in *1524*, 'for Asia properly so called' (ie the Roman province of Asia). In Acts 16:6 the Holy Spirit forbade Paul and Timothy to go to Asia; in 16:7, 'when they had come opposite Mysia' (NRSV), the Spirit of Jesus forbade them to go to Bithynia.

59 'This part of Asia' is evidently the Mysia that, in New Testament times, extended across much of the northern part of the Roman province of Asia; the region of Phrygia, also within the Roman province, lay to the east and south of Mysia.

60 Mysia] First in *1527*; in *1524*, 'greater Mysia'

61 For these as names of the later Bithynia see Ammianus Marcellinus *Res gestae* 22.8.14.

east[62] of which is that part of Asia properly called Pontus.[63] Again, when the Spirit forbade him to go there, he turned west, and going through Lesser Mysia returned through the midst of Phrygia all the way to Troas. Troas is on the Phrygian coast and has the name also of Antigonia. It is directly opposite the Chersonese, and hence the passage from Asia Minor to Europe is shortest from this city.[64]

They set sail from Troas and came by a straight course to the island of Samothrace, opposite Thrace, which lies to the north, then to Neapolis, a coastal city on the borderland between Macedonia and Thrace,[65] then to Philippi, which city, Luke points out, is a colony in the first part of Macedonia.[66] Paul writes one Epistle to the Philippians. Here, he, with Silas, was beaten with rods and thrown into prison.[67] After this, they came to Thessalonica, travelling through Amphipolis, which is not far from the Strymon River, and Apollonia, next to Thessalonica,[68] the capital of Macedonia. To these

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62 and east] Added in *1527*

63 For 'Pontus' see CWE 50 102 n17 and 112 n3. Elsewhere in the New Testament the name is found listed in Acts 2:9, between Cappadocia and Asia, and in 1 Pet 1:1, where it begins a list ending with Bithynia.

64 For the geography here and the route followed see CWE 50 101–2 and 102 nn19 and 23.

65 For the location of Neapolis see CWE 50 102 n24, where it is noted that 'borderland' translates *confinium*, as it does here, apparently with the same significance. 'They,' somewhat unexpected here, picks up the first of the 'we' passages in Acts (16:10–11), and the plural pronoun becomes persistent when the *Peregrinatio apostolorum* recounts the final journey of Paul to Jerusalem; cf n94 below and the paraphrase on Acts 16:10 CWE 50 102 with n21.

66 Cf Acts 16:12, where Philippi is called the 'leading city of the district … a Roman colony' (NRSV, similarly DV, AV). The Greek is ambiguous, but here, as in his paraphrase on the verse, Erasmus understands the Greek to mean, 'for one travelling from Neapolis, the first city in Macedonia one comes to.' Cf CWE 50 102 with n25.

67 Cf Acts 16:22–3.

68 Cf Acts 17:1. Amphipolis was founded as an Athenian colony (437–6 BC) at the mouth of the Strymon River, a few kilometres from the sea. The topographical observation locating Amphipolis in relation to the Strymon may indicate Erasmus' awareness of the strategic importance of the river (cf eg Herodotus *Histories* 7.113–15; Thucydides *Peloponnesian War* 4.105–8), as well as its allusive power in classical poetry (cf eg Aeschylus *Agamemnon* 192–5; Virgil *Georgics* 1.119–21 and *Aeneid* 10.264–6). Apollonia is approximately midway between Amphipolis and Thessalonica.

Thessalonians Paul wrote an Epistle.[69] Here, when trouble arose, he was sent away secretly to Beroea, a city separated from Thessalonica by Pella, birthplace of Alexander the Great.[70] At Beroea he found an audience ready to be taught.[71] Now Beroea is not far from the sea; accordingly, when a disturbance was raised, he was conducted to the sea and went to Athens by ship, if I mistake not, because Luke says he was sent away to go to the sea.[72] There is also another conjecture, that since it is a long way from Beroea to Attica, no mention is made of the regions and cities they would have come upon had they been travelling by foot.[73]

At Athens, he converted Dionysius. It is not quite clear whether Dionysius was a judge or a philosopher, since Luke calls him only an Areopagite. I believe, however, that everyone who lived in that part of the city was called an Areopagite.[74] I am at a loss to imagine why Bede makes this Dionysius the bishop of the Corinthians, for in Eusebius a certain Dionysius, bishop of the Corinthians, informs us that Dionysius the Areopagite was ordained bishop in Athens by Paul himself. Indeed, it is quite possible that Dionysius the

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69 'An Epistle': Perhaps a hurried generalization with no intention of excluding 2 Thessalonians. There is no indication that Erasmus questioned the authorship of 2 Thessalonians; cf Ep 1062:190, where by implication he includes the Second Epistle among the genuine letters, and CWE 43 460 n2.

70 Cf Acts 17:5–10. In the paraphrase on Acts 17:10 the city is, as here, similarly located in relation to Pella; cf CWE 50 106 n14.

71 'Ready to be taught': *dociles*; on the importance of this attitude see the paraphrase on Acts 8:34 CWE 50 61–2 and *Ratio* 493 with n20.

72 Cf Acts 17:14. See CWE 50 107 n19 for the location of Beroea in relation to the sea.

73 See CWE 50 107 n19 for ER Acts 17:14, which allows the apparent journey to the sea to be in fact a ruse. In his paraphrase on the verse, Erasmus is definitive: Paul went by sea to Athens; in his annotation (*ut iret usque ad mare*), however, Erasmus recognizes that the text allows the possibility that Paul went overland, but he notes that Paul usually does not fail to mention places through which he travels.

74 For the conversion of Dionysius see Acts 17:34. That Dionysius the Areopagite was a philosopher, author of the Pseudo-Dionysiac literature, was a view widely held in the sixteenth century, but one Erasmus had rejected; for the steps that led to Erasmus' rejection see *Ratio* 490–1 with nn12, 13. Elsewhere Erasmus defines an Areopagite as a judge; cf *Adagia* I ix 41 and the paraphrase on Acts 17:19 CWE 50 107–8 with n25. In his annotation on Acts 17:34 (*in quibus et Dionysius*) Erasmus notes that 'Areopagites were judges, not philosophers,' and in the annotation on Acts 17:19 (*ad Areopagum*) he indicates his preference for the translation 'Mar's quarter,' noting that not all who lived in the quarter were judges. Bede had also identified the Areopagus as a *curia* of Athens; *Super Acta apostolorum expositio* (on Acts 17:34) PL 92 981B.

Areopagite left no writings at all, since in Eusebius the books of Dionysius, bishop of the Corinthians, are so carefully reviewed, while no mention anywhere is made of the written works of the Areopagite.[75]

From Attica Paul went to Corinth, the capital of Achaia. He had determined to sail from here to Syria, and taking a vow in Cenchreae (the port of Corinth that looks towards Attica),[76] he shaved his head.[77] Setting sail, therefore, from Cenchreae, he arrived at Ephesus. Ephesus is on the shore of Asia Minor, in the part called Ionia.[78] Here, at that time, he left Priscilla and Aquila. Setting sail from Ephesus, he came to Caesarea, then to Antioch. Bede, following, I have no doubt, some ancient author, wants this Caesarea to be the Caesarea in Cappadocia, not Syria, and the Greeks want the Antioch to be the Antioch of Pisidia, mentioned twice before – though for one setting out from Ephesus, Pisidia comes before Cappadocia.[79]

Now at this point the Greek codices have something more than our Latin texts; that is to say, they read, 'When they asked him to stay a longer time with them, he did not consent but bade them farewell, saying, "I must

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75 On Bede see previous note; on Dionysius of Corinth, *Peregrinatio apostolorum* n20. Eusebius speaks of Dionysius the Areopagite in *Ecclesiastical History* 4.23.3 and briefly describes eight letters written by Dionysius of Corinth in ibidem 4.23.1–13.

76 Corinth had two ports, each some kilometres from the city – Lechaeum on the Corinthian Gulf, and Cenchreae on the Saronic Gulf leading into the Aegean Sea – and so 'looking towards Attica'; cf CWE 42 7 n15.

77 The narrative of Paul's 'second missionary journey' is concluded in Acts 18:1–22; for the vow see Acts 18:18.

78 'Ionian' Greeks colonized the coast of Asia Minor in the regions of Caria and Lydia; this coast consequently became known as Ionia. Herodotus gives an account of the Ionian cities of Asia Minor in the *Histories* 1.142; cf also Pliny (Elder) *Naturalis historia* 5.29.31.

79 Bede (*Super Acta apostolorum expositio* [on Acts 18:22] PL 92 982A) had identified this Caesarea as that in Cappadocia and was followed in this by both the *Gloss* and Nicholas of Lyra. In antiquity several cities bore the name 'Caesarea,' honouring the Caesars, likewise 'Antioch,' honouring the Seleucid king Antiochus. Caesarea was distinguished as the capital of Cappadocia (which had been made a Roman province in AD 17) and as the home of several noted theologian-bishops of the fourth century, especially Basil the Great. For Antioch of Pisidia see CWE 50 86 n32; the city is mentioned in Acts 13:14 and 14:21. By 'the Greeks' Erasmus evidently refers to the *Apodemia*, which speaks at this point of the Antioch in Pisidia. In Acts 18:21–2 the order of progress is from Ephesus to Caesarea to Antioch (of Syria), not, as the alternative interpretation required, from Ephesus to Antioch (of Pisidia) to Caesarea (of Cappadocia).

by all means celebrate in Jerusalem the approaching feast."' [Acts 18:20–1][80] Those who accept this reading prefer that Paul sailed directly from the Ephesian harbour to Caesarea of Palestine, then proceeded to Jerusalem and greeted the brethren; after this, he returned to Antioch in Syria and from there revisited Asia Minor again. Support for this view comes from the fact that we read, 'And going down to Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church' [Acts 18:22]. He indicates the city to which he came down, but not that to which he went up. But in gospel literature those who are making their way to Jerusalem are said to 'go up.'[81] From this they conjecture that he went up from Caesarea in Palestine to Jerusalem, where he had said he must celebrate the feast, and from there again descended as he proceeded to Antioch.[82] I have followed this view in this *Paraphrase*[83] as being a probable view, but I am quite ready to give it up if anyone brings forward a more probable view. We also read that he remained for some time at Antioch; now, it was at Antioch in Syria that Paul was accustomed to spending time gladly.[84]

From here, therefore, he returned to Asia. In travelling through the intervening regions where he had previously taught, he came to Galatia, from

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80 The words 'I must by all means celebrate in Jerusalem the approaching feast' are a 'Western' addition to the text. They appear in AV, but not in DV or NRSV; cf the annotation on Acts 18:21 (*iterum revertar ad vos*). Erasmus included these words in both his translation of and paraphrase on the verse; cf CWE 50 114 with n40.

81 Cf eg Matt 20:17–18; Mark 10:32–3; Luke 2:42, 18:31; John 2:13, 11:55. 'Going down to Caesarea' (Acts 18:22) represents VG *descendens Caesaream*; cf NRSV 'When he had landed at Caesarea.'

82 The conjecture is inevitable with the longer reading (cf n80 just above) but is also made without it, as, eg in DV and NRSV (but not in RSV or NEB). Cf CWE 50 114 n40.

83 Cf the Translator's Note 950 above. The *Peregrinatio apostolorum* appeared first as a preface to the *Paraphrase on Acts* published in 1524. In *1527* and *1535* it served as a preface to the text of Acts in the *Novum Testamentum* and did not appear with the *Paraphrase* of 1534 and 1535. It was only at the end of the *Peregrinatio* that Erasmus in *1527* adapted the language to accommodate the new setting for the *Peregrinatio apostolorum* as a preface to the text and translation of Acts in the *Novum Testamentum*; cf *Peregrinatio apostolorum* nn154, 157.

84 Cf eg Acts 18:22–3, also 11:26, 14:28, 15:30–5; and the paraphrase on Acts 14:28 (15:1 in paraphrase, CWE 50 94), where it is noted that the apostles 'took pleasure in staying' in Antioch.

here again to Phrygia, everywhere strengthening the disciples.[85] Then, since Apollos had now set out for Corinth,[86] he himself[87] set out for Ephesus – whether by a route overland or by sea is not at all clear, though it is more probable that he made the journey by land, since Luke adds, '… having travelled through the upper country' [Acts 19:1].[88] Here Paul had resolved to revisit Jerusalem, but first to travel through Macedonia and Achaia, understanding through the Spirit that he must also go to Rome after he had visited Jerusalem.[89] Accordingly, he sent Timothy and Erastus ahead to Macedonia, while he remained behind some time in Asia Minor. After a public disturbance raised by Demetrius, Paul followed the men he had sent ahead.[90] Travelling through the upper country, he came to the part properly called Greece, in which are Attica and Achaia.[91] Here, Luke does not mention Athens or Corinth, but it is inferred from the situation that, as he had

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85 The phrase echoes Acts 18:23. Erasmus now follows the outline of the 'third missionary journey' (outward bound – Antioch to Greece) as described in Acts 18:23, 19:1, and 20:1–4. While an overland route from Antioch would have taken Paul through Cilicia, it is probable that by 'intervening regions' Erasmus has in mind the cities of Lycaonia and perhaps Pisidia south of 'Galatia,' visited on the first and second missionary journeys, as described in Acts 13–14 and 16:1–5. For the return to Jerusalem as the conclusion of this third missionary journey see Acts 20:3–6, 13–16, 36–8; 21:1–8, 15–17.

86 For Apollos' move to Corinth see Acts 18:27–8.

87 himself] Added in *1527*

88 Cf the paraphrase on Acts 19:1 CWE 50 115, where 'the upper country' is explained as the regions of Asia Minor 'lying more to the north and east.'

89 For the ambiguous role of the Spirit in Acts 19:21 see the paraphrase on the verse, CWE 50 118 with n26. Here in the *Peregrinatio* some ambiguity remains, for while it appears to be Paul's own 'resolution,' ie the directive of his own spirit to go to Macedonia and Greece, it is clearly the Holy Spirit directing him to go to Rome.

90 For the story of Demetrius the silversmith and the tumult over 'Artemis of the Ephesians' see Acts 19:23–41. For the geographical details see Acts 19:21–2 and 20:1.

91 'Upper country' here is used for 'those regions' of the biblical text, referring to Macedonia. The 'part properly called Greece' normally would refer to the Greece below Mount Olympus, above which lay Macedonia (cf CWE 50 121 n4), but Erasmus here seems to refer primarily to Attica and the Peloponnese, as in his response to Cousturier; cf *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 745A–B: 'Greece properly so called in which is the Peloponnese.'

previously done,[92] Paul went from Attica to Achaia, where Corinth is, and again prepared to set sail from Cenchreae for Syria; since, however, he had realized that a plot had been prepared for him as he was about to sail, he changed his plan, and, retracing his steps, proceeded to Macedonia – overland, as it appears, since the plot was being prepared for him on the assumption that he would sail.

When, therefore, he was staying in Macedonia, he sent some of his companions ahead to Troas (which is in Phrygia); at that time he had many companions from Macedonia.[93] Paul followed, though he seems to have spent Passover at Philippi, because Luke writes: 'We sailed from Philippi after the day of the *azyma*' [Acts 20:6].[94] From Philippi, accordingly, he set sail for Troas, to which city his companions had preceded him, as I have said. Here he restored a young man who had died from a fall.[95] From Troas he arrived at Assos on foot by an overland route; on Paul's orders, his companions had preceded him here, going by ship. Assos is a coastal city, not far from Troas, also called Apollonia.[96] Setting sail from Assos, they arrived at Mitylene, a city on the island of Lesbos, directly on the way as you sail from Assos to Chios. From Mitylene, skirting the coast of Asia, they reached Chios, keeping the island on their right. Now, Chios is opposite Clazomenae on the coast of

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92 Ie as he had done on his second missionary journey; cf Acts 17:15, 18:1–2 and 18. The inference is evidently based on the statement that, after coming to Greece, Paul planned to sail to Syria – from which Cenchreae, the Corinthian port, would be the obvious point of departure.

93 An inference apparently from Acts 20:4. The itinerary in the *Peregrinatio apostolorum* that takes Paul to Jerusalem now follows closely the biblical account of the journey as recorded in Acts 20:5–6 and 13–16, 21:1–8 and 15–16. For Troas in Phrygia see *Peregrinatio apostolorum* n55.

94 In the paraphrase on Acts 20:6 CWE 50 121 (as in his translation of the verse) Erasmus correctly writes: 'After the days [plural] of the *azyma*, which immediately follow Passover'; cf CWE 50 121 n8. For the 'day of the *azyma*,' referring to Passover, see the paraphrase on Acts 12:4 CWE 50 80 with n7. The 'we' passages in Acts will now become reflected in the plural 'they.'

95 Cf Acts 20:7–12.

96 Cf the annotation on Acts 20:13 (*navigavimus in Asson*), where Erasmus notes that there are several cities with the name 'Assos' but cites 'Jerome' for the identification of this Assos in Asia with an alternative name, Apollonia; cf Bede *De nominibus locorum* PL 92 1035C.

Asia, midway between Lesbos and Samos,[97] to where (I mean to Samos)[98] they afterwards sailed. Now, Samos is opposite Trogyllium, a promontory of Asia.[99] Leaving Samos, they put in at Trogyllium, according to the Greek codices, though the Greek who wrote the 'travels' of Paul does not mention Trogyllium.[100] From Trogyllium they went to Miletus, a city on the coast of Caria. From Chios they could easily have put in at Ephesus, but they deliberately sailed past the city, in order not to be delayed in Asia too long. For since they had spent Passover at Philippi, they had determined to be in Jerusalem for Pentecost. Accordingly, after he had summoned the Ephesian elders to Miletus, and after he had delivered the instructions he wanted to entrust to them, they set sail from Miletus and came by a straight course to Cos.[101] This is an island between Samos and Cnidus, a city on a promontory of Asia. From Cos the course led to Rhodes, an island opposite Lycia. Now, however, as they sail along they begin to find Asia on the north, whereas it was formerly on the east. From Rhodes they came to Patara, a city on the coast of the province of Lycia.[102] Here, having found a ship going directly

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97 Ancient Clazomenae, on the north side of the Ionian peninsula that juts out into the sea from Smyrna (modern Izmir), lay some kilometres east of the peninsular shore that was immediately opposite Chios; the biblical text of Acts 20:15 says only that 'we arrived opposite Chios.' Erasmus may mention Clazomenae because of its fame: it was one of the twelve Ionian cities mentioned by Herodotus (*Histories* 1.142; cf n78 above) and was known as the birthplace of the distinguished philosopher Anaxagoras (500–428 BC). Cf also Pliny (Elder) *Naturalis historia* 5.29.31.

98 I mean to Samos] Added in *1527*

99 In his annotation on Acts 20:15 (*et sequente die venimus contra Chium)* Erasmus had from *1516* to *1522* identified Trogyllium as a 'town of Sicily,' revising the identification in *1527* to 'a promontory opposite Samos.' In his 1524 paraphrase on the verse he identified it as a 'city on the shore of Asia' CWE 50 122. See next note.

100 'The Greek who wrote the "travels" of Paul': A reference to the Greek *Apodemia*, on which see Translator's Note 950 above. The *Apodemia* at this point says simply that Paul went 'to Mitylene, then to a point opposite Chios, then to Samos, and from there to Miletus.' In Acts 20:15 some Greek texts read (with Erasmus), 'We arrived at Samos and tarried at Trogyllium' (AV), but the preferred reading omits the second clause 'and tarried at Trogyllium' (NRSV); cf Erasmus' annotation on the verse (*et sequenti die venimus contra Chium*). On Trogyllium see the paraphrase on Acts 20:15 CWE 50 122 with nn14 and 15.

101 For Paul's instructions to the Ephesian elders whom he assembled at Miletus see Acts 20:17–38.

102 Lycia became an autonomous imperial province in AD 43 (under Claudius) and, with Pamphyilia, was set up as a Roman province c AD 74.

to Phoenicia in Syria, they began to sail in a straight course directly there, and so keeping the island of Cyprus on their left, they landed at Tyre, on the Phoenician coast below Sidon. From Tyre they came to Ptolemais, a coastal city between Tyre and Mount Carmel. From here they arrived at Caesarea in Palestine, where Paul was lodged with Philip. From there he now arrived at Jerusalem, travelling on foot.[103] At Jerusalem, by order of the tribune Lysias, he was bound and escorted to Antipatris, which is situated midway between Jerusalem and Caesarea. From here horsemen conducted him to Caesarea in Palestine, from where, by order of Festus, the governor who succeeded Felix, he was escorted in bonds to Rome.[104]

His journey to Rome was this. First, he was placed on a ship and went from Caesarea to Sidon, which, as I have said, is above Tyre. From Sidon they[105] made for Cyprus, in such a way that they kept the island on the left – a roundabout course, but contrary winds were forcing them to go that way. Then, skirting the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, they had come to Myra (which scribes had changed to Lystra),[106] a city in Lycia, not far from the shore.[107] From here they proceeded by a difficult and lengthy voyage to a point where the promontory of Cnidus was on their right. But as the wind was contrary, they turned their course towards Crete, which was at that point on their left. Now they came to a port with the name of Salmone. I imagine that Luke gave to the port the name that happened to be in common use at that time, for I believe that this is the place Pliny and Strabo call

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103 According to the biblical account, Paul travelled from Corinth to Jerusalem with companions. In the *Peregrinatio* the companions are clearly present with Paul as far as Caesarea (Acts 21:8), but it appears that Paul makes the journey to Jerusalem alone. That Paul travelled on foot must be an inference from the location of Jerusalem.

104 For the details of the journey from Jerusalem to Caesarea see Acts 23:23–33; for the 'order' of Festus, Acts 25:12; and for the journey from Caesarea to Rome, Acts 27:1–28:16.

105 The 'we' passages resume in Acts 27:1, reflected in the *Peregrinatio apostolorum* by the subject 'they.' Cf n103 just above.

106 For his text of the New Testament Erasmus read 'Myra, a city of Lycia' (Acts 27:5), correcting VG 'Lystra, a city of Lycia'; cf the annotation on the verse (*venimus Lystram quae est Lyciae*), which concludes with a *1527* addition: 'I shall discuss places more carefully in the *Peregrinatio divi Pauli*.

107 Myra was about five kilometres from the sea, but its name included a major port at Andreace on the coast. Its most famous bishop, Nicholas, became patron of sailors.

Sammonium.[108] This promontory is situated on the east of Crete. From here they sailed along the coast of Crete – with difficulty because of the adverse winds – so as to keep the island on the right, until they came to a place in Crete (close to the city of Lasea) called 'Good' or 'Fair[109] Havens,' a name not found among the ancient geographers.[110] It appears to have been a name current only in that time. But that it lay on the southern shore of Crete is clear from the fact that they were trying to reach Phoenix, a promontory of Crete facing the Africus and Caurus winds. Now the Africus blows from the northwest, the Caurus from the southwest.[111] They had decided to winter there since the harbour seemed suitable. Meanwhile, when a quite advantageous wind, blowing directly from the south had arisen, they set sail from Asson (a city on the coast of Crete)[112] and coasted along the shore of Crete to reach the Phoenix just mentioned. But suddenly the wind changed to a different direction when, instead of a southwest wind, a typhoon wind, very powerful and dreaded by sailors, began to blow. This is also called a 'northeaster,' blowing from the north and east. By the force of the storm they were carried to an island called Claude,[113] which is below Crete, south and west. To this place the northeaster, blowing from the opposite direction, had been able to drive them precisely this way. Hence[114] they feared the even more serious danger

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108 Cf Pliny (Elder) *Naturalis historia* 4.12.58; Strabo *Geographia* 10.4.2–3; also CWE 50 145 n5.

109 or 'Fair] Added in *1527*. See the annotation on Acts 27:8 (*qui vocatur Boni portus*).

110 Cf Haenchen 699 n4: 'The ancient authors know nothing of [Fair Havens].'

111 In the biblical text of Acts 27:12 the topographical note that gives the orientation of the harbour in relation to the direction of the winds has perplexed scholars; cf the paraphrase on the verse, CWE 50 145 with n8. The difficulties are compounded here by the fact that Erasmus seems (perhaps inadvertently) to have confused the direction of the winds: the Africus blew from the southwest, the Caurus from the northwest.

112 Erasmus has misread the Greek text, mistaking an adverb, 'close to,' 'near,' for the name of a city ('Asson' DV; 'They began to sail past Crete, close to the shore' NRSV); cf CWE 50 145 n9.

113 The readings in Acts 27:16 vary. Though the text here in the *Peregrinatio* reads *Claude* (perhaps by mistake), Erasmus' New Testament reads *Clauda*; some witnesses read 'Cauda' (so NRSV). A *1535* addition to the annotation on the verse (*quae vocatur Clauda*) acknowledges that the 'Greek codex in the Pontifical Library' (Codex Vaticanus) reads "Cauda"'; cf 'New Testament Scholarship' 345 with n1486 for the epistolary exchange with Sepúlveda concerning this manuscript. See further CWE 50 145 n12.

114 Hence … Syrtes.] Added in *1527*

of being driven upon the Syrtes.[115] At length, when their situation had become desperate, they drove their ship upon the island called Malta, between Epirus and Italy, facing Sicily to the north.[116] Here he shook off a snake, receiving no harm from it. At Malta, finding another ship (for the first had broken up), they arrived at Syracuse, a city in Sicily not far from the promontory of Pachynus.[117] Skirting the coast of Sicily, they came to Rhegium, a town at the extremity of the country of the Brutii, where Italy is closest to Sicily.[118] They were carried from Rhegium to Puteoli by a direct course. Puteoli is a promontory in Campania not far from Naples. From here they came by a land route all the way to the Forum of Appius, to a place called 'The Three Taverns,' where Paul was met by disciples from Rome.[119] (Now the Forum of Appius is a day's journey from Rome.)[120] Hence at last they arrived at Rome.

It is clear, therefore, from Acts that Paul travelled through all of Asia Minor, then crossed into Europe, and travelled through all of Greece, in the north, where Macedonia lies, all the way to the country of Illyria – for Illyria

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115 Erasmus refers to the shallow, sandy bottom of the Mediterranean in the Gulf of Syrtes, off the northern coast of Africa.

116 For the geography here Erasmus identified the 'Sea of Adria' (Acts 27:27), which is between southern Greece and Italy, with the Adriatic Sea, which is between northern Greece (ancient Epirus, mentioned here) and Italy. He made the same mistake in the paraphrase on the verse (cf CWE 50 148 with n2) and in the *1516* annotation on Acts 28:1 (*quia Mitilene insula vocabatur*). He corrected the mistake in the *1535 Annotations*, locating Malta correctly between 'Africa and Sicily,' but never corrected the location in either the *Paraphrase* or the *Peregrinatio*. The annotation also questions the name of the island: from *1516* Erasmus followed his Greek codices, reading Melita, ie Malta.

117 'Pachynus': Ie the southeast tip of Sicily, modern Capo Passero

118 In both the paraphrase on Acts 28:13 CWE 50 149 and the annotation (*devenimus Rhegium*) Erasmus offers an interesting explanation of the proximity of island and peninsula. For the Brutii and for Rhegium see CWE 50 149 nn11 and 13. Here in the *Peregrinatio* Erasmus has (from 1524) correctly identified Rhegium as a city of Italy, though in his annotation he had until *1535* described it as a Sicilian city. In *1535* admonished by Sepúlveda he corrected the mistake (cf n113 above).

119 As in his paraphrase on Acts 28:15 CWE 50 149, the text here suggests that Erasmus places The Three Taverns at the Forum of Appius. In fact, The Three Taverns was a station at least sixteen kilometres from Forum Appii; for further discussion see CWE 50 149 n15.

120 The Forum of Appius was sixty-five kilometres distant from Rome, The Three Taverns forty-nine kilometres; cf Haenchen 718 n4.

is the farthest part of Macedonia, to the north and west.[121] Paul himself gives this information in the Epistle to the Romans, the fifteenth chapter: 'So that from Jerusalem round about[122] as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel' [15:19]. But nowhere do we read that he preached the gospel in Crete, where he arrived driven by the weather, and in bonds. Nor do we read that he delayed there at all, though he himself advised that they should pass the winter there.[123] And yet he left Titus in Crete to ordain presbyters in every city and to set in order what remained to be set in order there, as he himself affirms in his Epistle.[124] From those words it appears that he preached in Crete also. Nor does Luke report what Paul did in Arabia.[125] Thus and so much on the places through which Paul travelled.

Now let us proceed briefly with a chronological account. The events included in the book of Acts took place under four Roman emperors: Tiberius, who succeeded Octavius,[126] Gaius Caligula, Claudius Drusus, Claudius Nero. Of these Tiberius was in power for twenty-three years, Caligula four years less two months, Claudius thirteen years and about ten months, Nero fourteen and nearly eight months.[127] The events that occurred from the death

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121 The borders of Illyria (Illyricum) shifted through time, but for the sense in which Illyricum could be said to be a part of Macedonia see *New Pauly* 6 732–5.

122 round about] *per circuitum* (as in VG), first in *1527*; in *1524*, *per circulum* 'in a circle,' reflecting the Greek *κύκλω* 'in a circle'; in his New Testament Erasmus had translated *in circumiacentibus regionibus* 'in the surrounding regions'; cf the annotation on Rom 15:19 ('through a circuit').

123 Cf Acts 27:9–12.

124 Cf Titus 1:5. For Paul's supposed mission in Crete see the paraphrase on Titus 1:5 CWE 44 58 with n5, which points to the annotation on Titus 1:5 (*quae desunt corrigas*), where Erasmus sees in the verb 'set further in order' an 'emphasis' that implies a former mission of Paul to Crete.

125 Cf *Peregrinatio apostolorum* n35.

126 Gaius Octavius (63 BC–AD 14), grandnephew of Julius Caesar, became, after his adoption by Caesar, Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus, commonly referred to as Octavian. He assumed the title 'Augustus' after it was conferred on him by the Senate in 27 BC (cf 'Caesar Augustus' in Luke 2:1). Erasmus speaks of 'Caesar Octavius' in the annotation on Rom 5:12 ('in whom [or, in which] all have sinned') CWE 56 140.

127 The dates during which the four ruled are: Tiberius AD 14–37, Caligula AD 37–41, Claudius AD 41–54, Nero AD 54–68. Erasmus appears to be following Eusebius' *Chronicon* (translated by Jerome), though the *Chronicon* gives Nero thirteen years and nearly eight months, PG 19 542.

of Christ to the time Paul was taken to Rome are confined to six years of Tiberius, four of Caligula, fourteen of Claudius, and four of Nero. Peter is believed to have come to Rome at the beginning of Claudius' reign,[128] in the fourth year of whose reign a famine arose, which Luke mentions.[129] Again, in the ninth year of Claudius, as Josephus and Eusebius inform us, the Jews were expelled from Rome, which Luke mentions in the eighteenth chapter.[130]

Meanwhile, the governors of Judaea were: Pontius Pilate, who perished in the third year of Caligula;[131] he was succeeded by Felix, before whom Paul pleaded his case.[132] Claudius, in the eleventh year of his reign, made Felix procurator over the whole province, also over Samaria and Galilee, and even over the region called 'beyond Jordan.'[133] And Paul declares himself fortunate that he would plead his case before one to whom Jewish affairs were well known, inasmuch as he had been engaged in that province for a long

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128 Jerome says that Peter came to Rome in the second year of Claudius' reign, holding the 'sacerdotal chair' there until the fourteenth year of Nero; *De viris illustribus* 1.1.

129 Cf Acts 11:28. On the date of the famine (possibly AD 46–8) see Haenchen 62–3 with nn4, 5, 6, and 374.

130 Cf Acts 18:2. On the date of the expulsion see Haenchen 65. Haenchen cites Orosius *Historia contra paganos* 7.6.15–16 for the date, 'in the ninth year of Claudius,' noting that Orosius appeals to Josephus but without warrant, since in '[Josephus'] extant writings no such statement has been found.' Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 2.18.9 dates the expulsion at the time when Paul was completing his journey 'from Jerusalem as far as Illyricum' (Rom 15:19).

131 Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 2.7 records Pilate's death by suicide 'under Gaius,' ie Caligula, the nickname given to Gaius, who as a boy with his father, Germanicus, in the military camp, wore small military boots, *caligae*, hence the diminutive *Caligula*.

132 Cf Acts 24.

133 Although Erasmus introduces the governors by the term *praesides*, as he had translated the Greek in his New Testament, he speaks here quite properly of Felix as *procurator*. The procurators were normally financial officials in imperial provinces, ie provinces ruled by *legati* responsible to the emperor, but in some cases, as in Palestine, in this era they were the de facto 'governors' under the general supervision of the *legati*. Felix did not succeed Pilate immediately but was appointed by Claudius c AD 52 and served as procurator until AD 60, when he was succeeded by Porcius Festus. For the extent of Felix' authority see ABD II 783.

time.[134] Nero appointed Porcius Festus as his successor.[135] When Paul had pleaded his case before Festus in the presence of Agrippa, he was sent to Rome in bonds in the second or third year of Nero, since he had appealed to Caesar.[136]

Further, the Jewish leaders[137] were the following: King[138] Herod, Philip, and Lysanias ruled for six years. The king Herod, who died after he had been stricken by an angel at Caesarea, ruled for seven years. His son Agrippa, on whose advice Paul was sent to Rome, ruled for twelve years[139] – at the point on which the narrative of Acts concludes; the father also had the family name Agrippa, but only the son is called Agrippa in Acts.[140]

* * * * *

134 That Felix was procurator in the province 'for a long time' before Paul stood before him may be inferred from Acts 24:10; for the dates of his rule AD 52–60 see the previous note. Haenchen 71 dates his rule from AD 52–5 but acknowledges that AD 60 is the date more commonly assigned to the termination of his administration.

135 Festus as Felix' successor is mentioned in Acts 24:27, but the dates of Festus' administration are uncertain; cf CWE 50 138 n27.

136 Cf Acts 25:11–12 (the appeal) and 26:1–29 (the defence). Cf Jerome *De viris illustribus* 5.5, who says that Paul was sent to Rome in the second year of Nero. Haenchen (71) places Paul's arrival in Rome in early 56 (but cf n134 above). In fact, the date of the arrival is uncertain.

137 leaders] *principes* first in *1527*; in *1524*, *reges* 'kings'

138 king] Added in *1527*. For Herod, Philip, and Lysanias see Luke 3:1 and n140 below.

139 twelve years … concludes] First in *1527*; in *1524* simply, 'fifteen years.' Erasmus' chronology is difficult to follow. Erasmus said above (beginning of chronological account) that Paul was taken to Rome after four years of Nero's reign, though he has just now said that he was sent to Rome in the second or third year of Nero. The book of Acts concludes with the two years imprisonment in Rome. In fact, Agrippa's rule began in the early fifties. For the Herod stricken by an angel see Acts 12:20–3.

140 Erasmus may be following Bede; cf the preface to *Super Acta apostolorum expositio* PL 92 939B. The reference here is evidently to the Herod, Philip, and Lysanias of Luke 3:1: Herod Antipas who ruled from 4 BC–AD 39, Philip the Tetrarch who ruled from 4 BC–AD 33/34, and Lysanias, of whom virtually nothing is known and about whom Erasmus is uncertain in his annotation on Luke 3:1. Erasmus found the complex history of the Herods in Palestine perplexing; see the paraphrase on Acts 12:1 CWE 50 80 with n1 and the annotation on the same verse (*misit Herodes rex*) ASD VI-6 257–8, where Erasmus tries to work out the succession of the Herods, noting the place of Philip, Lysanias, and 'Herod the Younger'; cf ibidem 257:821–35n and 'New Testament Scholarship' 367 with n1589. For Lysanias see *The Gospel According to Luke* I–IX, introduction, trans, and notes by Joseph A. Fitzmyer SJ (New York 1981) 457–8.

Accordingly, in the eighteenth year of Tiberius, the Lord Jesus was killed, lived again[141] and ascended into heaven, and sent the Holy Spirit.[142] And the next year – or the same, as certain people will have it[143] – Stephen was stoned as soon as he was appointed one of the deacons; Paul consented to the stoning and kept the garments of the witnesses who were stoning him.[144] A little later, in the nineteenth year of Tiberius, Paul is cast down and converted in Damascus.[145] He travelled through various regions, everywhere spreading the gospel, right to the thirteenth year of Claudius. In this year, Paul was cast into prison in Jerusalem by the tribune Lysias; from Jerusalem he was sent in bonds to Caesarea to be heard by Felix, where he was kept in prison for two years. Still in prison, he was handed over by Felix to Porcius Festus, who sent him to Rome, where he was kept in bonds a full two years, that is, to the fifth year of Nero.[146]

Luke does not follow the story further. Conscientious writers seem to have added other things on the basis of various conjectures; I mean that when Paul first made his case before Nero, he was acquitted and for ten years freely preached the gospel where he wished. At length, when Nero's savagery had finally become madness, Paul was called back before Nero's judgment seat and was beheaded.[147] They base the conjecture on the Second Epistle of Paul

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141 'Lived again': *revixit*; the expression is apparently deliberate; cf the annotation on Rom 14:9 ('he died and rose again').

142 Cf the Greek *Apodemia*, which dates these events in the eighteenth year of Tiberius. In the *Ecclesiastical History* 1.10.1–6 Eusebius (relying on Luke 3:1) reports that Jesus' ministry began in the fifteenth year of Tiberius and extended for less than four full years. Thus Erasmus dates these events in AD 31; cf 972 n127 above.

143 Cf the *Apodemia*, which places the ordination of Stephen 'some few days after' the ascension.

144 Cf Acts 6:1–6 (Stephen's appointment as deacon) and 7:58–8:1 (stoning, witnesses, and Paul's consent).

145 Cf Acts 9:1–19 (conversion). The *Apodemia* also places the conversion 'shortly after the stoning of Stephen,' and the beginning of Paul's preaching in the 'nineteenth year of Tiberius.'

146 Cf Acts 21:27–33, 22:23–9, 23:23–24:27, 27:1, 28:16, and 28:30. In the *Apodemia* too, Paul preaches throughout the world until the thirteenth year of Claudius.

147 This account of Paul's last years was widely accepted; cf eg Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 2.22.1–8; Jerome *De viris illustribus* 5.1–8. It is reflected in the Argument to the *Paraphrase* on 2 Timothy; cf CWE 44 40 with n2. For the beheading see Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 2.25.5. The *Apodemia* also notes the madness of Nero.

to Timothy, where he mentions his first defence, when he was abandoned by everyone and yet freed by God's help.[148] And that he then returned to preaching they gather from the fact that he soon adds, 'But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, that by me the preaching may be fulfilled, and that all the gentiles may hear' [2 Timothy 4:17]. Moreover, that his life was at risk in his second defence is shown by the fact that in the same chapter he writes, 'For I am already on the point of being sacrificed, and the time of my departure is at hand' [2 Timothy 4:6]. Accordingly, they believe he was crowned with martyrdom in the thirteenth year of Nero, in the thirty-sixth year after the death of Christ, or[149] according to the calculations of the *Chronicon*, the thirty-eighth.[150] Moreover, that Luke left Paul in his first defence they conclude from the fact that his narrative of things he had seen concludes at this point. Again, that he was present at Paul's second defence Paul is witness when he says in the same Epistle, 'Luke alone is with me' [2 Timothy 4:11]. From all of this one may gather that Paul was engaged in the gospel work for twenty-one years, besides the two when he was in prison in Caesarea, and the other two he passed at Rome in bonds, dwelling in a rented house,[151] to which ten are added, as the histories relate.[152] Thus you will find that from the baptism of Paul to his death there are thirty-five years, or,[153] as some calculate, thirty-seven.

Since these things seemed to throw some light on the text, I have been pleased to set them in the front of this work.[154] And yet I am aware that the chronology cannot be established with precision, since on the question of years not only do different writers disagree with each other, but there are discrepancies even in individual writers. For example, Bede, in the eighteenth chapter of his commentary, writes (on the authority of Josephus) that the Jews were expelled from Rome in the ninth year of Claudius; in the chronological

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148 Cf 2 Tim 4:16–17.

149 or … thirty-eighth.] Added in *1527*

150 Cf Eusebius *Chronicon* translated by Jerome, PL 27 571 and 589. Erasmus had followed the *Apodemia* in dating the martyrdom in the 'thirteenth year of Nero' and the 'thirty-sixth year after the death of Christ.'

151 For the rented house see Acts 28:30; CWE 50 151 n25.

152 Cf n147 above.

153 or … thirty-seven.] Added in *1527*. For the two-year discrepancy see n150 above.

154 'This work': Ie the *Paraphrase on Acts*; cf *Peregrinatio apostolorum* n83 and n157 below.

note with which he prefaces his work, he says this took place in the eighth year.[155] So also in Eusebius you will sometimes find one year in his *History*, another in the *Chronicle*, where it remains ambiguous whether Tiberius ruled for twenty or twenty-three years.[156]

Farewell, dear reader, and good luck go with you as you read the Acts.[157]

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155 Cf Bede *Super Acta apostolorum expositio* PL 92 940A and 981B.

156 Cf Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 2.4.1 and the *Chronicon* translated by Jerome, PL 27 575.

157 the Acts.] First in *1527*; in *1524*, 'the *Paraphrase*'; cf *Peregrinatio apostolorum* n83 and 154 above.

# VITA SANCTI MATTHAEI PER DIVVM HIERONYMVM.

MAtthæus qui & Leui, ex publicano Apoſtolus, primus in Iudæa propter eos qui ex circunciſione crediderant, euangelium CHRISTI Hebraicis literis uerbiſque compoſuit. Quod quis poſtea in Græcum tranſtulerit, non ſatis certum eſt. Porrò ipſum Hebraicum habetur uſque hodie in Cæſarienſi bibliotheca, quam Pamphilus martyr ſtudioſiſſime cõfecit. Mihi quoq; à Nazaræis, qui in Beroea urbe Syriæ hoc uolumine utuntur, deſcribendi facultas fuit. In quo animaduertendum, quod ubicunque euangeliſta, ſiue ex perſonâ ſua, ſiue ex perſona domini ſaluatoris, ueteris ſcripturæ teſtimonijs utitur, non ſequatur Septuaginta tranſlatorum autoritatem, ſed Hebraicam, è quibus illa duo ſunt. Ex Aegypto uocaui filium meum. Et, quoniam Nazaræus uocabitur.

| τὸν κατα ματθαιον εὐαγγελιὸν τα κεφαλαια. | CAPITA EVANGELII SECVNDVM MATTHAEVM. |
|---|---|
| α Περὶ τῶν μάγων. 3. | DE Magis. cap.1. |
| β περὶ τῶν ἀναιρεθέντων παιδίων. 4. | De pueris interfectis. cap.2. |
| γ πρῶτος ἰωάννης ἐκήρυξε βασιλείαν οὐρανῶν. 4. | Primus Ioannes prædicauit regnum cœlorum.cap.3. |
| δ περὶ φωνῆς διδασκαλίας τοῦ χριστοῦ. 6. | De doctrina Chriſti.cap.4. |
| ε περὶ τῶν μακαρισμῶν. 7. | De beatitudinibus.cap.5. |
| ϛ περὶ τοῦ λεπροῦ. 14. | De leproſo.cap.6. |
| ζ περὶ τοῦ ἑκατοντάρχου. 14. | De Centurione.cap.7. |
| η περὶ τῆς πενθερᾶς πέτρου. 15. | De ſocru Petri.cap.8. |
| θ περὶ τῶν ἀδυνάτων ἀπὸ ποικίλων νόσων. 15. | De ijs q curati ſunt à uarijs morbis.9. |
| ι περὶ τοῦ μὴ ἐπιτρεπομένου ἀκολουθεῖν. 15. | De eo cui nõ permiſit ut ſequereť.10. |
| ια περὶ τῆς ἐπιτιμήσεως τῶν ὑδάτων. 16. | De increpatione aquarum.cap.11. |
| ιβ περὶ δύο δαιμονιζομένων. 16. | De duobus dæmoniacis.cap.12. |
| ιγ περὶ τοῦ παραλυτικοῦ. 16. | De paralytico.cap.13. |
| ιδ περὶ ματθαίου. 17. | De Matthæo.cap.14. |
| ιε περὶ τῆς θυγατρὸς τοῦ ἀρχισυναγώγου. 18. | De filia archiſynagogi.cap. 15. |
| ις περὶ τῆς αἱμορροούσης. 18. | De muliere ſang.profluuio labo.16. |
| ιζ περὶ δύο τυφλῶν. 18. | De duobus cæcis.cap.17. |
| ιη περὶ τοῦ δαιμονιζομένου τοῦ κωφοῦ. 18. | De dæmoniaco muto.cap.18. |
| ιθ περὶ τῆς τῶν ἀποστόλων διαταγῆς. 19. | De apoſtolorũ ordinatione.cap.19. |
| κ περὶ τῶν ἀποσταλέντων παρὰ ἰωάννου. 21. | De diſcipulis à Ioanne miſſis.cap.20. |

κα De

*Novum Testamentum* 1519, page 110, Jerome's 'Life of Matthew' and the first page of the Index of the Greek chapter divisions detailed in the Eusebian Canon
The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto

WORKS FREQUENTLY CITED

SHORT-TITLE FORMS
FOR ERASMUS' WORKS

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APOCRYPHAL REFERENCES

INDEX OF GREEK AND
LATIN WORDS CITED

GENERAL INDEX

## WORKS FREQUENTLY CITED

| | |
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| Allen | *Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami* ed P.S. Allen, H.M. Allen, and H.W. Garrod (Oxford 1906–58) 11 vols and Index |
| ASD | *Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami* (Amsterdam 1969– ) |
| AV | *The Holy Bible, Authorized King James Version* (London 1611) |
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| CHB | *Cambridge History of the Bible* I ed Peter R. Ackroyd and C.F. Evans, II ed G.W.H. Lampe, III ed S.L. Greenslade (Cambridge 1963–70) 3 vols |
| Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique* | Jacques Chomarat *Grammaire et rhétorique chez Érasme* (Paris 1981) 2 vols |
| CSEL | *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (Vienna 1866– ) |
| CWE | *Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto 1974– ) |
| de Jonge *Novum Testamentum* | H.J. de Jonge '*Novum Testamentum a nobis versum*: The Essence of Erasmus' Edition of the New Testament' *Journal of Theological Studies* n s 35 (1984) 394–413 |
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| DV | *The Holy Bible, Douay-Rheims Version* rev by Bishop Richard Challoner (Baltimore 1899) |

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|---|---|
| ER | Erasmus' translation of the New Testament |
| ERSY | *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook* (1980– ) |
| Ferguson *Early Christianity* | *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* 2nd ed, ed Everett Ferguson et al (New York 1997) 2 vols |
| Fitzgerald *Augustine* | *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* ed Allan D. Fitzgerald OSA et al (Grand Rapids MI 1999) |
| FOTC | *Fathers of the Church* (Washington DC 1947– ) |
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| LB | *Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami opera omnia* ed J. Leclerc (Leiden 1703–6; repr Hildesheim 1961) 10 vols |
| L&S | Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford 1879; repr 1975) |
| LSJ | *A Greek-English Lexicon* compiled by Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, rev and augmented by Sir Henry Stuart Jones, 9th ed with supplement (Oxford 1968) |

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| LXX | [Septuagint] *Septuaginta: id est Vetus Testamentum Graeca iuxta lxx interpretes* ed Alfred Rahlfs (Stuttgart 1949) 2 vols |
| NCE | *New Catholic Encyclopedia* 2nd ed, ed Berard L. Marthaler et al (New York 2003) 15 vols |
| NEB | *New English Bible* (Oxford and Cambridge 1970) |
| *New Pauly* | *Brill's New Pauly Encyclopedia of the Ancient World* ed Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider, English edition managing editor Christine F. Salazar, assistant editor David E. Orton (Leiden 2002–10) 15 vols plus index |
| NRSV | *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (New York 1989) |
| ODCC | *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* ed F.L. Cross; 3rd rev ed, ed E.A. Livingstone (Oxford 2005) |
| *Patrology* | *Patrology* I–III ed Johannes Quasten (Westminster MD 1951–60), IV ed Angelo di Berardino, trans Adrius Walford (Cambridge 2008) 4 vols |
| PG | *Patrologiae cursus completus … series Graeca* ed J.-P. Migne (Paris 1857–66; electronic edition) 162 vols. Indexes F. Cavallera (Paris 1912) |
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| PL | *Patrologiae cursus completus … series Latina* ed J.-P. Migne. *Patrologia Latina Database*, electronic version representing the first edition (Paris 1844–1865; ProQuest Learning Company 1996–2018) |
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| Valla *Opera omnia* | Laurentius Valla *Opera omnia* (Basel 1540; repr Turin 1962, with introduction by Eugenio Garin) 2 vols |
| VG | Vulgate translation of the Bible |
| Weber | *Biblia sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem* ed Robertus Weber with Bonifatio Fischer OSB et al, 4th rev ed (Stuttgart 1994) |

# SHORT-TITLE FORMS OF ERASMUS' WORKS

Titles following colons are longer versions of the same, or are alternative titles. Items entirely enclosed in square brackets are of doubtful authorship. For abbreviations see Works Frequently Cited.

Acta: Academiae Lovaniensis contra Lutherum Opuscula / CWE 71
Adagia: Adagiorum chiliades 1508, etc (Adagiorum collectanea for the primitive form, when required) LB II / ASD II-1–9 / CWE 30–6
Admonitio adversus mendacium: Admonitio adversus mendacium et obtrectationem LB X / CWE 78
Annotationes in Novum Testamentum LB VI / ASD VI-5–10 / CWE 51–60
Antibarbari LB X / ASD I-1 / CWE 23
Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae: Apologia respondens ad ea quae Iacobus Lopis Stunica taxaverat in prima duntaxat Novi Testamenti aeditione LB IX / ASD IX-2
Apologia ad Caranzam: Apologia ad Sanctium Caranzam, or Apologia de tribus locis, or Responsio ad annotationem Stunicae … a Sanctio Caranza defensam LB IX / ASD IX-8
Apologia ad Fabrum: Apologia ad Iacobum Fabrum Stapulensem LB IX / ASD IX-3 / CWE 83
Apologia ad prodromon Stunicae LB IX / ASD IX-8
Apologia ad Stunicae conclusiones LB IX / ASD IX-8
Apologia adversus monachos: Apologia adversus monachos quosdam Hispanos (Loca quaedam emendata in second edition, 1529) LB IX
Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem: Apologia adversus debacchationes Petri Sutoris LB IX
Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii: Apologia ad viginti et quattuor libros A. Pii LB IX / ASD IX-6 / CWE 84
Apologia adversus Stunicae Blasphemiae: Apologia adversus libellum Stunicae cui titulum fecit Blasphemiae et impietates Erasmi LB IX / ASD IX-8
Apologia contra Latomi dialogum: Apologia contra Iacobi Latomi dialogum de tribus linguis LB IX / CWE 71
Apologia de 'In principio erat sermo': Apologia palam refellens quorundam seditiosos clamores apud populum ac magnates quo in evangelio Ioannis verterit 'In principio erat sermo' (1520a); Apologia de 'In principio erat sermo' (1520b) LB IX / CWE 73
Apologia de laude matrimonii: Apologia pro declamatione de laude matrimonii LB IX / CWE 71
Apologia de loco 'Omnes quidem': Apologia de loco taxato in publica professione per Nicolaum Ecmondanum theologum et Carmelitanum Lovanii 'Omnes quidem resurgemus' LB IX / CWE 73
Apologia: D. Erasmi Roterodami apologia LB VI / CWE 41
Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei: Apologia qua respondet duabus invectivis Eduardi Lei Opuscula / ASD IX-4 / CWE 72
Apophthegmata LB IV / ASD IV-4 / CWE 37–8
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Appendix respondens ad Sutorem: Appendix respondens ad quaedam Antapologiae Petri Sutoris LB IX

Argumenta: Argumenta in omnes epistolas apostolicas nova (with Paraphrases)
Axiomata pro causa Lutheri: Axiomata pro causa Martini Lutheri Opuscula / CWE 71

Brevissima scholia: In Elenchum Alberti Pii brevissima scholia per eundem Erasmum Roterodamum ASD IX-6 / CWE 84

Carmina LB I, IV, V, VIII / ASD I-7 / CWE 85–6
Catalogus lucubrationum LB I / CWE 9 (EP 1341A)
Ciceronianus: Dialogus Ciceronianus LB I / ASD I-2 / CWE 28
Colloquia LB I / ASD I-3 / CWE 39–40
Compendium vitae Allen I / CWE 4
Conflictus: Conflictus Thaliae et Barbariei LB I / ASD I-8
[Consilium: Consilium cuiusdam ex animo cupientis esse consultum] Opuscula / CWE 71
Contra morosos: Capita argumentorum contra morosos quosdam ac indoctos LB VI / CWE 41

De bello Turcico: Utilissima consultatio de bello Turcis inferendo, et obiter enarratus psalmus 28 LB V / ASD V-3 / CWE 64
De civilitate: De civilitate morum puerilium LB I / ASD I-8 / CWE 25
Declamatio de morte LB IV
Declamatiuncula LB IV
Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas: Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas sub nomine facultatis theologiae Parisiensis LB IX / ASD IX-7 / CWE 82
De concordia: De sarcienda ecclesiae concordia, or De amabili ecclesiae concordia [on Psalm 83] LB V / ASD V-3 / CWE 65
De conscribendis epistolis LB I / ASD I-2 / CWE 25
De constructione: De constructione octo partium orationis, or Syntaxis LB I / ASD I4
De contemptu mundi: Epistola de contemptu mundi LB V / ASD V-1 / CWE 66
De copia: De duplici copia verborum ac rerum LB I / ASD I-6 / CWE 24
De delectu ciborum scholia ASD IX–1 / CWE 73
De esu carnium: Epistola apologetica ad Christophorum episcopum Basiliensem de interdicto esu carnium (published with scholia in a 1532 edition but not in the 1540 Opera) LB IX / ASD IX-1 / CWE 73
De immensa Dei misericordia: Concio de immensa Dei misericordia LB V / ASD V-7 / CWE 70
De libero arbitrio: De libero arbitrio diatribe LB IX / CWE 76
De philosophia evangelica LB VI / CWE 41
De praeparatione: De praeparatione ad mortem LB V / ASD V-1 / CWE 70
De pueris instituendis: De pueris statim ac liberaliter instituendis LB I / ASD I-2 / CWE 26
De puero Iesu: Concio de puero Iesu LB V / ASD V-7 / CWE 29
De puritate tabernaculi: Enarratio psalmi 14 qui est de puritate tabernaculi sive ecclesiae christianae LB V / ASD V-2 / CWE 65
De ratione studii LB I / ASD I-2 / CWE 24

De recta pronuntiatione: De recta latini graecique sermonis pronuntiatione LB I / ASD I-4 / CWE 26
De taedio Iesu: Disputatiuncula de taedio, pavore, tristicia Iesu LB V/ ASD V-7 / CWE 70
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